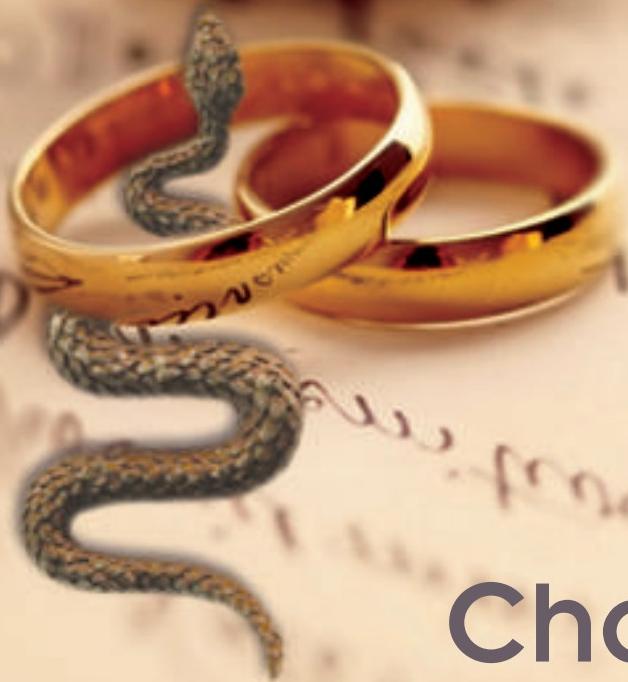


"In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)



Chastity

Homosexuality and World Religions	13	Effectiveness of Lowering Gaze & Fasting	25
Homosexuality Nature or Choice? A Review of Scientific and Medical Facts	16	Homosexuality: A Review of Social, Psychological and Moral Facts	29
Marriage and Chastity How can they go together?	20	Sex Related Sins	35

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY
United States of America

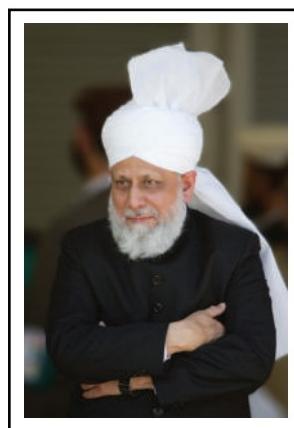
The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah).

The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity.

Hadrat Ahmad(as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: "The religion of the people of the right path" (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Quranic teaching:

"There is no compulsion in religion" (2:257).

It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason. After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah.



Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul Masih V

The Muslim Sunrise

www.muslimsunrise.com

Editor
Falahud Din Shams

Editorial Board
Imam Mubasher Ahmad
Dr. Karimullah Zirvi
Dr. Wajeeh Bajwa
Dr. Lutfur Rahman
Shahina Bashir

Design/Layout
Naveed Ahmad Malik

Website
Muneeb Ahmad

Circulation
Mubashar A. Khan

The Muslim Sunrise is published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA, 15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring, MD 20905, Phone 301.879.0110, Fax 301.879.0115, under the auspices of Dr. Ahsanullah Zafar, *Amir امیر* (National President). The views and opinions expressed by individual contributors in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA.

The Muslim Sunrise welcomes letters to the editor, questions and submissions. Email us at MuslimSunrise@Ahmadiyya.us or go online to www.MuslimSunrise.com

Library of Congress Call Number BP195.A5 M8

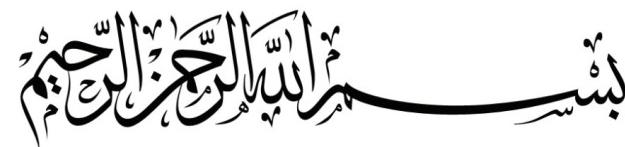
Mailing Address:

The Muslim Sunrise,
15000 Good Hope Road,
Silver Spring, MD 20905,
Phone: 301.879.0110,
Fax: 301.879.0115.

Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq^{ra} (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the Muslim Sunrise, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.





Departments

Poetry Corner (07)

Blessings of Holy Quran, By The Promised Messiah(as)
Translated By Shazia Sohail

Editorial (08)

Spiritual Treasures (22)

"British Government and Jihad"

Reviewed by Naveed Ahmed Malik, Washington DC

Religion & Science(36)

How to save ourselves from AIDS and STDs?
Zia H Shah MD, Chief Editor of the Muslim Times

News, Views & Reviews (43)

Women's Corner (44)

Mothers: The Builders of a Nation

Shahina Bashir

Responsibilities of a Muslim Wife

Shehla Ahmad

From the Archive (48)

Marriage, Divorce and the Church of England

Muslim Sunrise – 1953-Issue 2

Questions & Answers (49)

Perspective (51)

Serving the Wayfarer



In This Issue

In the words of the Promised Messiah(as)	06
Remedies for Unchastity	
From www.alislam.org	
Friday Sermon Synopsis April 24th 2015	09
Delivered by Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad	
Homosexuality and World Religions	13
Imam Mubasher Ahmad, M.A. LL.B	
Homosexuality: Nature or Choice. A Review of Scientific and Medical Facts	16
Dr. Ijaz A. Rauf, Ph.D.	
Marriage and Chastity How can they go together?	20
Rabia Khan	
Effectiveness of Lowering Gaze & Fasting	25
Imam Rizwan Khan	
Homosexuality: A Review of Social, Psychological and Moral Facts	29
Dr. Ijaz A. Rauf, Ph.D.	
Sex Related Sins	32
Anwar Mahmood Khan	
Ramadhan Mubarak	53

FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

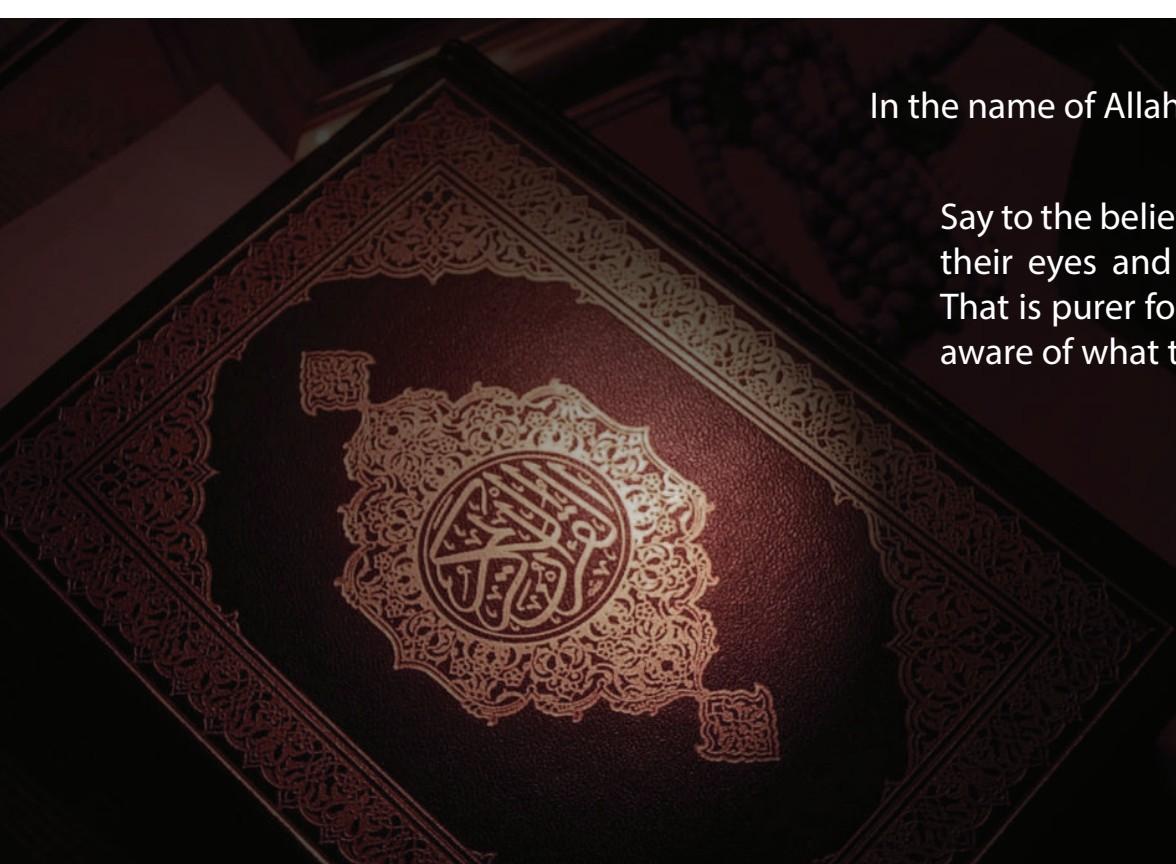
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ①

قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَعْصُو اِمْنَأْبُصَارِهِمْ
وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ ط
إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ②

In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful.

Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do.

Chapter 24: Al-Nur Verse 31



IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH^(as)

Remedies for Unchastity

(The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam, Ruhani Khazain, Vol 10, pp. 343-344, taken from "The Essence of Islam" Vol III at alislam.org library)

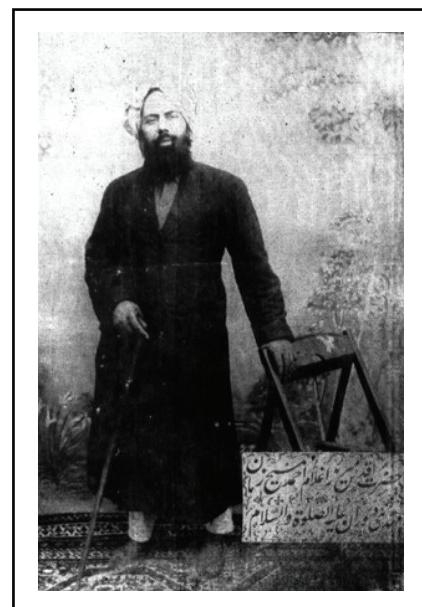
God Almighty has not only set forth excellent teaching for acquiring chastity, but has also furnished man with five remedies to safeguard himself against chastity. These are to restrain one's eyes from gazing at women who are outside the prohibited degrees, to avoid listening to their voices, to refrain from hearing stories about them, to avoid occasions which might furnish incitement to vice and to control oneself during celibacy through fasting, etc.

We can confidently claim that this excellent teaching with all its devices that is set forth in the Holy Quran is peculiar to Islam. However, one point should be kept in mind: since the natural condition of man, which is the source of his appetites, and from which he cannot depart without a complete change in himself, is such that his passions are bound to be roused when they are confronted with the occasion and opportunity for indulging in such vice, God Almighty has, therefore, not instructed us that we may freely look at a woman outside the prohibited category, and we may contemplate their beauty and observe all their movements in dance, etc., but that we should do so with pure looks. Nor have we been instructed to listen to the singing of these women and to lend ear to the tales of their beauty, but with pure intent. Instead we have been positively prohibited from looking at their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise, or listening to their musical voices or relating descriptions of their beauty, whether with pure intent or otherwise. We have been directed to eschew all of this as we eschew carrion, lest we stumble due to our unlawful glances.

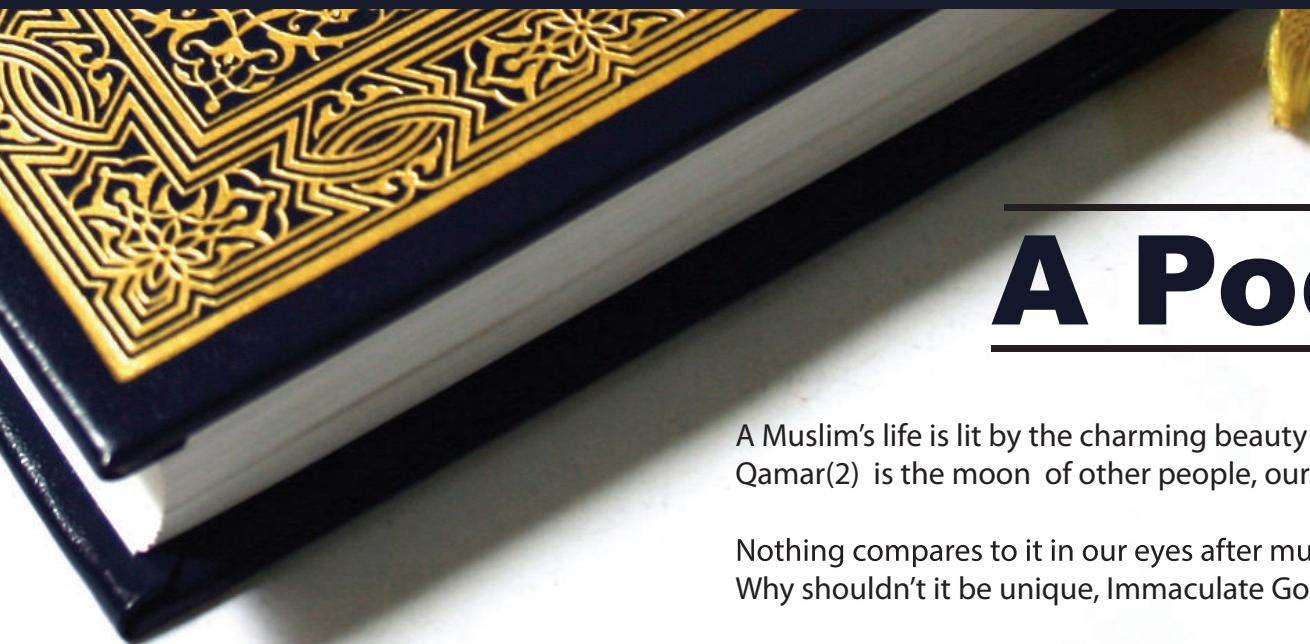
As God Almighty desires that our eyes and hearts and all our limbs and our responsibilities should remain pure, He has furnished us with this excellent teaching. There can be no doubt that lack of restraint causes missteps. If we place fresh bread before a hungry dog, it will be vain to hope that the dog will pay no attention to it. Thus, God Almighty desired that human faculties should not be provided with any occasion for secret functioning and should not be confronted with anything that might incite dangerous tendencies.

This indeed is the philosophy that underlies the Islamic injunctions regarding the veil, and this is what the *Shari'ah* demands. The Book of God does not aim at keeping women in captivity like prisoners. This is the thinking of the ignorant who are not aware of the Islamic ideals. The purpose of these regulations is to restrain men and women from letting their eyes rove freely from displaying their beauty and charm, for this is to the benefit of both men and women. Remember, in Arabic *ghadd-e-basar* means to restrain oneself from casting even a cursory glance at the wrong place, while at the same time seeing things which are permissible.

It does not behoove a pious person, who desires to keep his heart pure, that he should lift his eyes in an unbridled manner like a beast. It is necessary for such a person to cultivate the habit of *ghadd-e-basar* in his social life. This is a blessed habit through which a person's natural impulses are transformed into a high moral condition without adversely affecting his social needs. This is the quality which, in Islam, is called *ihsan* or chastity.



POETRY CORNER



A Poem

A Muslim's life is lit by the charming beauty of the Quran
Qamar(2) is the moon of other people, our moon is the Quran

Nothing compares to it in our eyes after much reflection
Why shouldn't it be unique, Immaculate God has written it

Eternal spring emanates from it in each and every passage
This merit is not in a flower bed, no garden is like it

The holy discourse of the Creator can have no parallel
May it be the pearl of Oman, or the ruby of Badakhshan

How can ever the word of man be equal to the word of God
Weakness here, Omnipotence there, the difference is clear

Even angles admit to ignorance in His royal presence
How could it be in one's power to be His equal in discourse

Even a foot of an insect a human never can create
The light of truth, how could he hope, ever to create?

O people, have some regard for glory of His Majesty
Hold your tongues even now if you have any shred of belief

It is extreme impiety to hold another as God's equal
Have some fear of God my friends, this is falsehood and libel

If you admit to having faith in the Oneness of God's being
Then why is there hiding in your heart limitless idolatry?

How did your heart get shrouded in these mantles of ignorance?
You are mistaken, do desist, if you have any fear of God

We have no spite, dear brothers, this is humble admonition
Our heart and soul is offered to any rightly guided person

1. Braheen-i-Ahmadiyya.
Volume 3, page 182. Published in 1882
2. Full moon.

EDITORIAL

SUMMER 2015

Traditionally, the word chastity has been understood to mean sexual purity. In Islam and Christianity it refers to abstaining from sexual activity outside of marriage. It applies to both men and women. The term also is identified with protecting oneself from adultery, fornication and prostitution. Other religions such as Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism etc. all preach chastity.

Up until the 19th century, even in the Western countries, chastity was much talked about and was valued especially in the areas where Shakers (an offshoot of the Quakers) and Catholics were in majority. In recent decades, the West has depreciated the virtue of chastity and related discussions are only to address the social and physical issues that arise from promiscuity. Fornication has become the unquestioned norm in Western society. The issues of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), prostitution and teenage pregnancies are discussed only in view of solving the resultant problems instead of promoting the solution of chastity.

Deviating from chastity has resulted in the widespread of STDs. In the United States of America, according to government reports, CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) estimates that nearly 20 million new sexually transmitted infections occur every year. It accounts for 16 billion dollars in health care costs and about ten million of these cases each year are among youth aged 15-24 years. The CDC report for year 2013 indicated a rise in Syphilis cases and it is the highest among gay and bi-sexual men.

We need not go into the obvious horrific trends in the spread of HIV. The CDC also reports that young women face the most serious long term health consequences. It estimates that every year 24,000 women become infertile as a result of STDs.

Islam places a great deal of emphasis on chastity. The commandments of Allah are clearly spelled out for men and women in the Holy Quran as well as in the books of Ahadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet(sa)). Islam not only strongly advocates to abstain but has provided the means to control natural desires such as fasting. Chastity directly relates to social morality and protects people from the sinful activities resulting from lust.

In a chaste society, couples have an enjoyable life with two parents raising their children. Sex is a means of procreation and enjoyment within the confines of marriage and results in secure and long lasting happy lives of family units. The harm of getting away from chastity is too obvious for anyone to ignore.

In this issue we have a few articles about chastity to invite the readers to advocate this important virtue highly valued among all major religions of the world. Islam has shown a much more consistent track record of guarding the chastity among its followers. It is the result of the clear and practical commandments, and the importance it has placed on this issue. Men and women both need to be chaste for the betterment of the society and the future of the human race.



Friday Sermon Synopsis

Delivered by Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad
on April 24, 2015

A question which is raised these days perhaps more than ever before by the young, those who have not had proper guidance and those who do not follow religion is that since worldly education leads to good morals what is the point of abiding by religion? It is said that morals can be instilled without any religious education, in fact it is maintained that people who do not follow religion have better morals than religious people. In particular this allegation is levelled at followers of Islam. Adherents of other faith have distanced themselves from their beliefs but even non-practicing Muslims associate themselves to the faith they were born in, therefore, in reality this allegation is aimed at Muslims. Efforts are made to influence our youth against religion. A good aspect of Western education is that it emphasizes research and exploration but this needs to be done methodically. Parents are not able to answer adolescents when they question them on these issues, either due to lack of time owing to societal or economic pressures or because they simply do not have the knowledge. Many a time, rather than answer the adolescents, parents suppress them. This causes the adolescents to assume that although Islam claims to be the true faith with a solution to every problem, it does not have the answers in practical terms and in keeping with the times.

Youngsters absorb all of this in silence, but when they have the freedom to do so, they distance themselves from religion. As a result, in spite of Islam being a living faith we find people among Muslims who reject religion and the

existence of God. In light of this, we all need to reflect upon how we should practice our faith and also inspire our youngsters to practice. Most certainly Islam is a perfect religion and the Holy Quran is a complete book, and the blessed model of the Holy Prophet(sa), the embodiment of the Quran, is before us. It was his blessed model that generated a revolutionary change in his Companions(ra); they understood faith, they understood morality and they also progressed in a material sense. They kept all three aspects within their context.

Youngsters should try, in fact, so should adults, to understand correct morals, material success and spirituality and then put them all into practice. When youngsters understand this point it will open up avenues of success for them and they will realize how beautiful the teaching of Islam is and they will recognize the lies of Islam's detractors. Questions that are raised today are not something new; this has been going on in the past because people do not try to understand religion in its correct form. So-called religious scholars present fictitious, erroneous solutions to people and plunge the educated people in further confusion about religion. At times people themselves make incorrect inferences about religion. -

God sent the Promised Messiah(as) to address these problems and he imparted insight to us. Hadrat Musleh Mau'ud(ra) delivered a Friday sermon on the correlation between morality, material gain and religion and the Islamic viewpoint on the matter and how the Holy Prophet(sa) demonstrated this through his practices.

It is difficult to separate religion, morality and man's material needs. A religious person cannot separate morality from religion and he also does not abandon the thought of having material needs. Indeed, this would stop the cycle of material progress. However, although correlated, these matters are also distinguishable. People who do not follow religion maintain that man needs good morals and material success. However, a true Muslim will maintain that man is also in need of religion because it takes man to God.

Islam alone makes the correlation between spirituality, morality and material success. However, a vast majority of Muslims do not understand the reality of religion and connect morality and material gain to religion rather excessively, so much so, that they drive people away from religion. Aside the essentials of Islam like salat and fasting, some religious scholars insist that matters like conventions and rallies etc. are also part of Islam and those who do not participate in them are disbelievers or apostates. Even this stance is exceeded and each sect passes its fatawa [i.e., rulings] against the others and conflicts carry on. All of this results in extremist groups formulating so-called religious laws and carrying out murder and mayhem. The situation in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan is borne of fictitious laws made in the name of religion! A French journalist who was released from ISIL captivity saw some practices there which seemed contrary to the knowledge of Islam he had. Upon his questioning ISIS individuals, they replied that they did not know what Quran and Ahadith said, they simply followed their own law.

The current situation in Yemen is also a manifestation of implementing biased fatawa in the guise of religion to kill innocent people through air strikes. True, both the parties are wrong, but this does not mean that one can kill the other! Every religious scholar and every maulana seems to have made up their own religion and there is no semblance between true Islam and the Islam that they practice. This is the reason a vast majority of people have turned away from religion.

On the other hand, the developed but non-religious Western world tries to make morality and spirituality a part of the material world. If they reflect over the phenomenon of revelation they say it is an element of human dynamics and they look upon morality as something that is beneficial for the world. They ponder over religion and say that religion somewhat saves uneducated or less educated people from committing crime. And they say those who are already moral do not need religion.

Reflecting upon morality, spirituality and material success tells us that they are so intertwined that not everyone realizes where and how they are linked. We look at the

blessed life of the Holy Prophet(sa) to understand the correlation. He was the world reformer for spiritual, moral and material aspects. His blessed life is a composite of them all. He said without prayer man's faith cannot be perfected. That is, while worship of God was essential he also stressed upon spiritual development. The link between prayer (dua) and man is like the link between mother and child. *Dua* means to call upon someone and one only calls when one is sure that help will be forthcoming. Three elements are necessary for calling out. Firstly, one must be certain that one's entreaty will be heard, secondly, one must have the assurance that whom one calls has the power to help, and thirdly, one must have an inherent love and devotion to whomsoever one calls out and is compelled to turn to that person and none other.

The first two are elements pertaining to the mind. If one is not sure that one's call will be heard and if one does not have the assurance that the person requested has the power to help, it would be foolish to call out to that person! The third element, however, is inherent to human nature. It is inherent love and devotion which make one disregard everyone else and make one turn to the object of one's love. It is like the inherent love between a mother and child. Even if a drowning child knows his mother cannot swim, if she is around it is her that the child will call out to for help and no one else. This is borne out of an emotional connection about which the Holy Prophet(sa) said that faith cannot be perfected without prayer. He deemed the connection between God and man as the connection between a mother and child, where the child runs to the mother under all circumstances.

The second element is of morals. We see exquisite aspects of this in the blessed life of the Holy Prophet(sa). We see his fine deportment and expression of love with his wives, something essential to have a happy home life. His love and care for his wives was such that if a wife drank water from a utensil, when he wanted to drink he would put his mouth where his wife had placed her mouth to drink. On the face of it, this is something minor but it makes a very fine point. It signifies that love is not only expressed by great big gestures but is really evident from small gestures! The blessed life of the Holy Prophet(sa) is replete with amazing accounts of matters pertaining to morals so much so that it seems all his life he only studied and taught morals. He was exemplary and peerless in regard to mutual connection of mankind, mutual connection of relatives, and shunning falsehood, betrayal and mistrust. The third element that his teaching guides to is regarding material aspects. For example, keeping roads clear for civic life, water supply, cleanliness of roads, advice to make homes roomy and airy. He drew attention to matters of the world, be it governance, culture, trade or industry. However, contrary to the so-called religious leaders of today, the Holy Prophet(sa) did not deem everything part of religion.

For example, once the Holy Prophet(sa) some farmers pollinating date trees by bringing the male parts of the tree into contact with the female parts. He suggested to them to not do that and let the pollination happen naturally through wind. The farmers abandoned the practice but that season they did not have good harvest. When the Holy Prophet(sa) was informed of the reason of lesser yield, he said he had not commanded them to abandon the practice. He said their knowledge of these matters was more than his. Thus, here material aspects have been separated from religious matters. Here the Prophet of Allah(sa) was telling people they knew more than him about worldly matters and we have maulawis today who are ever ready to declare people disbelievers and apostates at the drop of a hat! And then there is the other side of the coin where the Western world only emphasizes material success.

Their philosophers say it is not a matter of how God created man, it is how man (God forbid) created God. They consider that man was in search of an excellent model and when this model was not found among mankind, thoughts went beyond the realms of humanity and gradually a perfect being was envisaged and this emerged as the concept of God. This is how these people have made the concept of God a material aspect. Gradually they turned away from religion and the current-day philosophers are inclined to atheism. The vast majority of people in the West do not believe in the existence of God and they consider morality and material success as everything. Whereas the current-day maulawis are provocative and they make everything a religious matter.

We are fortunate as Ahmadis that the Promised Messiah(as) saved us from these issues and guided us to follow the blessed model of the Holy Prophet(sa) who, of course, taught moderation in everything. He taught that most certainly worship of God is most important, as it is the objective of our creation; however, one's own self also has rights as does one's wife and neighbors. In order to fulfil these rights we have to employ three kinds of resources: firstly, prayer and worship of God; secondly, control one's emotions and ponder over human psychology; and thirdly, to be honest in one's employment or profession and seek knowledge of the worldly sciences.

If we ponder we realize that, in order to fulfil our own rights, prayer and connection with God avail as does controlling emotions. Honesty at work can lead to us enhance our moral, spiritual and material life. Similarly, in order to fulfil the rights of family we pray, control our emotions and meet their material needs. Rights of neighbors/society will be fulfilled with prayers, paying their dues and trying to understand their mind-set so that the message of Islam may be taken to them appropriately. By working hard at work we

become useful members of society and when everyone practices this society becomes a model of morality, spirituality and material success.

The dire strait of the Muslim world today is borne of the fact that they have discounted all of this and have given their selfish desires the name of religion. As a result, rather than extol Islam's qualities to others, they follow their fictitious creed and are killing each other. They have lost both in worldly terms and spiritual terms and are reduced to begging others in every matter.

The Western world gave precedence to worldly matters over faith but at least they succeeded in attaining their worldly goals, even if through the wrong means. The Promised Messiah(as) was sent for the reformation of both of these extremes. It is at such times that God sends His people to the world who keep things in perspective and employ faith in its proper context, morality in its context and worldly matters are dealt within their context. On the face of it, God's people bring a spiritual message but the three aspects are correlated. Excellence in spirituality definitely leads to reformation of morals, and good morals definitely lead to better material conditions. However, it is not necessary that a person who has material gains will also be moral or that one who has good morals will also be spiritual. God wishes to bring man closer to Him. For this He has made moral reformation and material success conditional to spirituality or being religious. God states a true believer is granted all kinds of success.

There are different ways to attain moral, spiritual and material success but there is also a mutual way and that forges a perfect connection with God. Morality is attained by striving for it and material success is attained by striving for it, but the results of both of these efforts are limited within their own sphere. However, those who try to attain spirituality are granted everything. The Companions of the Holy Prophet did not take his bai'at because they wanted to make wide streets or wanted to promote cleanliness all around. Rather, they recited 'There is none worthy of worship save Allah and Muhammad is His messenger' and this reformed their morals and also their worldly matters.

In the times of Hadrat Umar(ra) Muslims had to leave Syria because of the large Roman army. Syrian Christians wept when Muslims departed and stopped them from leaving saying they would help them if they stayed. They were Christians as were the Romans but their bond with the Muslims was the result of high Muslim morals and excellent governance. Although governance is a worldly attainment, Muslims of that time were granted it by virtue of their faith.

Hadrat Musleh Mau'ud(ra) said that the Promised Messiah(as) used to narrate an account of a trader who was going away

on travels and left a large sum of money as a trust with the town's qadi. On his return he asked the qadi for his money bag but the qadi simply denied ever having been given any money to hold in trust. The trader was very perturbed and gave the qadi many clues to remind him of his money bag but the qadi said he never keeps others' properties as a trust. They were ruled by a very approachable king. The trader went to see him and explained his story. The king asked him for some proof that he had left his money. The trader said he had none. The king thought of a plan and asked the trader to stand next to the qadi on the day of the king's procession. The king said he would talk to the trader in a friendly informal manner and the trader should respond in kind. On the day of the procession both the king and the trader openly chatted in a friendly manner and the trader related the account of his money bag being left with someone as a trust and the difficulty he was having in retrieving it. The king said He would say to the trader if he continued to have difficulty in getting back his money he should come and see the king. The trader agreed and followed the plan on the day of the procession. The Qadi saw everything. When the procession passed he said to the trader his memory was not very good and he had probably forgotten about the money bag.

He asked for some clues and when he was given the clues he said, "Why didn't you tell me before? I will go and get your bag!"

Now, if friendship with a worldly source of power can give a person so many advantages, how it could be that friendship with God would not bring one acclaim of the world. But belief is required for this; belief that attracts God's pleasure.

A person with perfect belief can never abandon high morals. If he adopts all aspects of morals and practices them he will attain honesty, verity, trustworthiness, righteousness and purity. And this will certainly result in him gaining knowledge, skill, awareness, ability and diligence and he will attain worldly success as well. A true believer should focus more upon a spiritual connection. Man is not rewarded unless he excels at something and excellence is also beneficial in religion and one must try and excel.

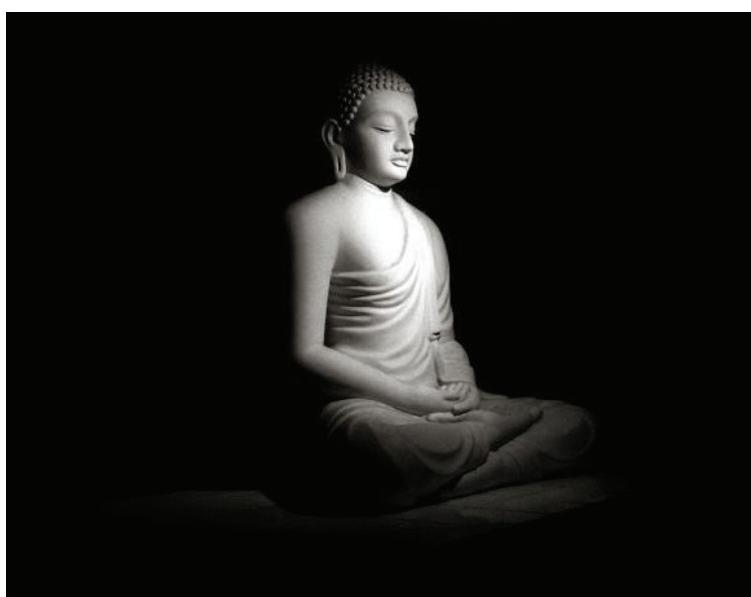
The Promised Messiah(as) used to say that only those people benefit from him who have intense associations with him; either those who are intensely opposed, like Maulawi Sana Ullah sahib and who are well known mainly for opposing him or those who are absolutely sincere. Feeble association does not benefit. If man turns to God he will be treated as others were in earlier times. If man really tries for this he will attain it. What is needed is to bow down to God with perfect sincerity and this brings success. We should make an effort to attain God, and try to understand the religion sent by God and make the love of God an intrinsic part of us. This will lead to high morals and we will also receive material success. If we try and partake of divine light we will truly receive God's beneficence. If we try and partake of divine light with earnestness it will dispel the darkness of falsehood, indolence, deception and other ills and high morals will be instilled in us. If we wish to save our next generation from the bad effects of materialism here we will have to explain to them the correlation between religion and morality. If we wish to make material success dependent upon spirituality and connect it to spirituality, we also need to establish a true connection with God for ourselves.



HOMOSEXUALITY AND WORLD RELIGIONS

Imam Mubasher Ahmad, M.A. LL.B

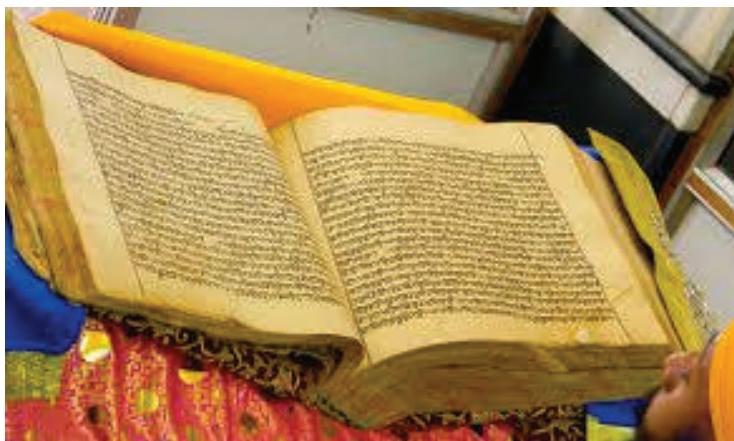
If procreation is the natural objective of sexual drive, a marriage must be heterosexual. Therefore, relationship between homosexuals is considered sin in most of the world religions. However, with the advancement of scientific information concerning the role of human genes, and political pressure for equal human rights for homosexuals, in some religious quarters it has become a controversial issue. In Hinduism, gods and goddesses set example of a good marriage between opposite genders for the humans to follow. Parvati is not only wedded to Shiva, she is also his Shakti – the divine energy. Radha is totally devoted to Krishna, setting an exemplary love-based marriage between opposite genders. Marriage in Hinduism is a sacred bond between a male and female for procreation of a family, to observe duties of Dharma, and to have a loving companionship for bestowing mutual pleasures. However, some segments of Hinduism do not find homosexuality morally reprehensible. The famous Indian sex-compendium, *Kama Sutra*, though not a religious book, has remained popular in India over centuries, and includes homosexuality as an enjoyable art to be learnt and be proficient at. If the power of love is an eternal source of joy for attaining the final liberation called *Moksha*, then romantic love between members of the same gender can be seen as legitimate. Some ancient Indian sculptures engraved in temples show women engaged in erotic lesbian acts. Rig Veda, the Hindu Holy Scripture does not condemn homosexuality if it is for the sake of love and pleasure.



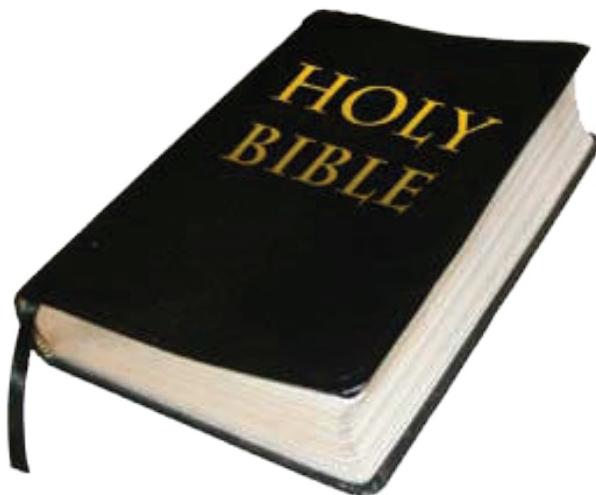
According to scholastic research there is no mention of sexual misconduct or sex related sinfulness in early Buddhism which was a reactionary faith to Hinduism in some respects. At later stage, differing opinions about homosexuality emerged in Buddhism depending upon the branch of the faith that an individual belonged to. Buddhism took various forms like Theravada, Tibetan, Chinese and Japanese, etc. As self-centered desires are hindrances in the way of achieving enlightenment in Buddhism, for the monks and priestly persons, putting curb on sex was imperative. But a lay person was left to follow his or her cultural traditions. It is interesting to note that among earlier Buddhist text such as Vinaya (the first book the Tripitaka), humanity has four genders: male, female, bisexual and promiscuous homosexual. The last two genders were looked down upon as inadequate to gain enlightenment in their own lifetime, therefore, they were usually not ordained to become monks. They were considered as void of spiritual discipline, having degraded sexual obsessions, unable to comprehend the true spirit of *Dharma*, so much so that monks were not allowed even to accept any donations from them. However, there was a time in Japan when romantic love between older Buddhist monks and young apprentices was celebrated (i). Buddhist monks who considered homosexuality as sin were in minority. It looks that at present time Buddhist spiritual leaders such as Dalai Lama have become less rigid in denouncing homosexuality. The OUT Magazine, in its February/March 1994 issue, quotes Dalai Lama saying: "If someone comes to me and asks whether homosexuality is okay or not, I will ask 'What is your companion's opinion?' If you both agree, then I think I would say 'if two males or two females voluntarily agree to have mutual satisfaction without further implication of harming others, then it is okay."

Jainism, a very tolerant, non-violent religion, stresses on sexual purity, and asks its spiritual leaders either to remain celibate, or monogamous. Having sex outside marriage is considered to lead to negative Karma. Chastity is a great virtue, and it is defined as abstinence from all kinds of sensual pleasures including sex Brahmacharya – purity of body and mind. This virtue is achieved through celibacy when unmarried, and fidelity when married. To achieve *Moksha* – spiritual liberation - it is required to avoid sexual misconduct. However, in Jain sacred scriptures, there is no mention of homosexuality as a punishable sin. It is not allowed because it does not help in continuation of life.

The holy scripture of Sikhism, Guru Granth Sahib has no mention of homosexuality, may be because it too clearly advocates marriage between a man and women as the only acceptable norm and a natural process for procreation and spiritual unity. However, as Sikhs believe that God loves all without exception, therefore, homosexuals are not forbidden to perform religious services in Gurdwaras.



The Abrahamic religions sanctify the institution of marriage as a Divine plan, exemplified in the narration of the first couple, Adam and Eve -- a man and a woman. It seems that homosexuality was practiced in Canaanite religion, and God commanded the Israelites to shun it completely, declaring so in unambiguous terms. In the Torah, it is written: "You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination." (ii). "...they shall be put to death – their bloodguilt is upon them." (iii). Breaking this commandment was punishable by stoning to death.



Christianity also declared it immoral: "Neither the adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...will inherit the kingdom of God." (iv). For the same reason, it is considered a sin to sodomize a woman, even if she is one's lawfully wedded wife. According to the Biblical story, sexual perversity brought the wrath of God upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah because their men engaged in the sin of homosexuality (v). Talking about the sinfulness of Gentiles, St. Paul very clearly states:

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened...Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another...God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." (vi).

However, many Christians with liberal beliefs do not see homosexuality as a sin, as long as the sexual act is 'safe' and it is believed that at the time when the Scriptures were written, 'sexual orientation' was not fully understood. They read the story of Sodom and Gomorrah differently, claiming that the sins of the cities were manifold, including inhospitality towards visitors, unresponsiveness to the poor and the needy, and desire to rape strangers! They argue that in the Bible the sexual behavior between the same-sex partners is not condemned; only the acts of sexual violence, exploitation and promiscuity are declared as sinful.





The Holy Quran also narrates the story of the people of Lot who lived in Sodom and Gomorrah and without any ambiguity calls their open homosexuality an act of sin, for which they were destroyed: "The people of Lot rejected the Messengers; when their brother Lot said to them, 'Will you not fear God? Surely I am unto you a Messenger, faithful to my trust; and I ask you no reward for it. My only reward is with the Lord of the worlds; out of all creation have you selected only males for yourselves to cohabit with, and do you leave aside your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people who transgress all limits.' (26:161-167). At another place in the Holy Quran it is written: "And We sent Lot, when he said to his people, 'Do you commit an abomination such as no one in the world ever did before you? You approach men with lust instead of women. Nay, you are a people who exceed all bounds.' (7:81-82). According to the Quran, the people of Lot were destroyed by God through a hail of burning stones.

Therefore, in some Muslim countries, male homosexuality is considered as a crime, legally punishable by death. Those who argue against physical punishment to homosexuals say that the Quran does not prescribe any punishment, and even for other sexual crimes such as adultery it requires four eye-witnesses, therefore, it is rather impossible to obtain such evidence. However, it was only in America that one organization named Al-Fatiha Foundation was established in 1997 by a Pakistani American to help resolve the conflict between homosexual Muslims' sexual orientation and teachings of Islam; but it did not succeed to achieve its goal, and was dissolved in 2011.



References:

- (i) Leupp, Gary P. (1995). *Male Colors, the Construction of Homosexuality in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkeley. The University of California Press. ISBN 0-585-10603-7
- (ii) Leviticus. 18:22.
- (iii) Leviticus. 20:13
- (iv) 1 Corinthians 6:10
- (v) Genesis 18:16-33
- (vi) Romans 1:21-27

HOMOSEXUALITY: NATURE OR CHOICE

A Review of Scientific and Medical Facts

Dr. Ijaz A. Rauf, Ph.D.

Until two decades ago, sexual orientation used to be called sexual preference. Obviously, the two terms denote significant differences in the manner by which sexuality develops. A preference is something that is chosen, whereas orientation is merely something that defines us. The differences are potentially important regarding how the law applies to those who are homosexual. If homosexuality is not chosen, but is a biologically-determined characteristic over which we have no choice, then laws should not treat homosexuals and heterosexuals differently, since homosexuality would be equivalent to one's race, over which we have no control.

It was Sigmund Freud [1] who first postulated that parental relationships with a child ultimately determine the youngster's sexual orientation. But this "nurturing" aspect has effectively given way to the "nature" side of the equation. Can some behaviors (e.g., alcoholism, homosexuality, and schizophrenia and drug addiction) be explained by genetics? Are these and other behaviors influenced by nature or by nurture? Are they inborn or learned? Are people born homosexual or straight? Modern society has two responses to these questions.

The advocates of acceptance of homosexuality have put forth a great effort to convince the world that homosexuality is both natural and normal. It is simply different, and that only because it is the orientation of a minority, do we classify it as a disorder or perversion. They have been quite successful in this effort. This view, however, rests on a number of questionable premises, which if false, lead us back to the traditional view.

The question has been poorly studied, to say the least, since many of the initial studies, which were highly trumpeted by the media as "proof" for a biological basis for homosexuality, have been contradicted by later, more thorough and controlled studies.

Science has looked at the causes of homosexuality, and more generically the causes of human sexual orientation, with the general conclusions being related to a complex interplay between biological and environmental factors. The biological factors that have been researched are genetic and hormonal, particularly during the fetal developmental period that influences the resulting brain structure. There are a wide range of environmental factors (sociological, psychological), that may influence sexual orientation.



As the attraction process sexual or otherwise starts in the brain, the very first aspect that I would like to review and sum up is the brain structure and if there is any scientific evidence that the brain structure of homosexuals and heterosexuals is different.

Brain Structure Differences:

There had been numerous studies comparing the male & female brains and some have tried to extend these studies to find the differences in the homosexual and heterosexual brains. Some of these later studies showed that male and female brains showed sexual dimorphism in the pre-optic area of the hypothalamus, whereas males demonstrated a greater than two-fold difference in cell numbers and size compared to females [2]. A second study found that two of four Interstitial Nuclei of the Anterior Hypothalamus (INAH) were at least twice as large in males as females [3].

Based on similar studies it was hypothesized by Simon LeVay that there might be differences in this region in heterosexual vs. homosexual men. Post-mortem examination of the brains of AIDS patients vs. control male subjects (presumed to be heterosexual) showed that the presumably heterosexual men exhibited INAH3 that were twice the size of both females and presumably homosexual men who had died of AIDS [4].

These studies became very popular in the media since they supported a natural cause for the sexual orientation. There was a popularized Newsweek cover story, "Is This Child Gay?" [5], which characterized LeVay as a "champion for the genetic side of sexual orientation" even though the study involved no genetic data at all. Please note that all these

studies by Swaab, Allen and LeVay were published in late 80's or early 90's. A study by Byne, et al. examined the question of INAH3 size on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, and the HIV status of the Human subjects [6] in 2001 about a decade after the Swaab, Allen and LeVay studies.

This study found large differences in INAH3 volume on the basis of sex (with the male INAH3 being larger than the female INAH3) just as the earlier studies. However, the volume of INAH3 was decreased in male heterosexual men who had contracted AIDS (0.108 mm compared with 0.123 mm in male controls). There was no statistically significant difference between INAH3 sizes of male heterosexual vs. male homosexuals who had contracted AIDS (0.108 mm and 0.096 mm, respectively). The study also found that there were no differences in the number of neurons in the INAH3 based upon sexual orientation, although researchers found significant differences between males and females, as in other studies [6].

LeVay's study [4] was scientifically flawed due to the complication and effects caused by the presence of AIDS, as it did not take into account the aliasing factors and the influence of AIDS on the INAH3. In summary all the studies hypothesizing earlier a difference in the brain structure of heterosexuals compared to homosexuals were either proven to be incomplete, wrong or having excluded other influencing factors that were affecting the brain structure rather than the sexual orientation. Hence to date no scientific evidence exists that supports the hypothesis that sexual orientation is caused by the difference in the brain structure and hence it is natural.

Hormonal Imbalance:

Based on the fact that the sex of a child is defined within the womb, as a result of hormonal influences, some people hypothesised that homosexuality may result from a differential hormone balance in the wombs of those who eventually exhibit a homosexual orientation. It has been shown that ratios of digit length are predictors of several hormones, including testosterone, luteinizing hormone and estrogen [7]. In women, the second digit (2D) is almost the same length as the fourth digit (4D). However, in men, it is usually shorter than the fourth. It has been shown that this greater 2D:4D ratio in females is established in two-year-olds.

A study by Williams, et al. showed that the 2D:4D ratio of homosexual men was not significantly different from that of heterosexual men. However, homosexual women displayed significantly smaller 2D:4D ratios compared with heterosexual women [8]. McConaghy et al found that the more older brothers a boy has, the more likely he is to develop a homosexual orientation [9]. Males who had two or more older brothers were found to have lower 2D:4D ratios [8]

suggesting that they had experienced increased androgens in the womb. Why increased androgens would predispose both males and females to be homosexual was not explained in the study

Studies involving a rare hormonal imbalance, congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH), caused by defective 21-hydroxylase enzyme, suggest that hormonal abnormalities can influence sexual orientation. CAH results in increased production of male hormones during development. In case of male fetuses, increased androgens have little effect. However, female fetuses that develop in this environment develop ambiguous external genitalia, which complicate subsequent development. In utero treatment with dexamethasone reduces the androgen imbalance, resulting in an individual who is genetically and phenotypically female [10] and it also reduces the homosexual orientation in such treated females. This does indicate that the homosexual orientation, if caused in the womb by hormonal imbalance is a treatable hormonal disorder.

These studies examining effects of very high doses of female hormones to pregnant mothers show no effect on males and a dubious effect on women. About 90% of Western "intersex" children (those born with ambiguous genitalia) choose to remain in their gender of upbringing when puberty reveals their true genetic gender and surgical interventions are offered. Often, this choice is made in the face of very contrary physical and hormonal characteristics. It demonstrates predominant environmental influences on the formation of gender orientation and behaviour.

A 2006 Swedish study [11] of lesbians was reported in the world press as showing a physical basis for lesbian behavior when exposed to female hormones. Dr. Savic of the Stockholm Brain Institute, one of the co-authors of the study, stated; "This is incorrect and is not stated in the paper." This study simply demonstrated that lesbian women reacted differently than heterosexual women in response to hormonal treatment. This may mean that the reaction is a result of the homosexual behavior rather than the origin of the behavior.

The Gay Gene:

Is it Genetic? A group led by Dean H. Hamer of the National Cancer Institute tried to link male homosexuality to a gene on the X chromosome. His team investigated 114 families of homosexual men. Hamer and his colleagues [12] collected family history information from 76 gay male individuals and 40 gay brother pairs as they searched for incidences of homosexuality among relatives of gay men. They concluded that a gene for homosexuality might be found on the X chromosome, which is passed from the mother alone. They then used DNA linkage analysis in an effort to find a correlation between inheritance and homosexual orientation.

Since many of the families with predominance of homosexual relatives had a common set of DNA markers on the X chromosome, Hamer and his coworkers assumed a genetic etiology. Of the 40 pairs of homosexual brothers they analyzed, Hamer's group [12] found that 33 exhibited a matching DNA region called q28 – a gene located at the tip of the long arm of the X chromosome. In summarizing their findings, Hamer and colleagues [12] noted: "Our experiments suggest that a locus (or loci) related to sexual orientation lies within approximately 4 million base pairs of DNA on the tip of the long arm of the X chromosome" This discovery also prompted Hamer and his colleagues to speculate: "The linkage to markers on Xq28, the subtelomeric region of the long arm of the sex chromosome, had a multipoint lod score of 4.0, indicating a statistical confidence level of more than 99 percent that at least one subtype of male sexual orientation is genetically influenced."



One of the most significant problems with Hamer and his coworkers' [12] study was that they did not check if any of the heterosexual relatives of the homosexuals also had the Xq28 as well as they did not have any explanation about the other 7 subjects included in the study who were homosexual but did not have the "gay gene". About seven years later George Rice and his colleagues [13] looked intently at the gene Xq28 and included 182 families in their study. They noted: "It is unclear why our results are so discrepant from Hamer's original study. Because our study was larger than that of Hamer et al., we certainly had adequate power to detect a genetic effect as large as was reported in that study. Nonetheless, our data do not support the presence of a gene of large effect influencing sexual orientation at position Xq28."

In 1990, with funding from the National Institute of Health, the Genome Project was initiated. The National Human Genome Institute has the following on its website regarding this project [14].

"The Human Genome Project (HGP) was one of the great feats of exploration in history — an inward voyage of discovery rather than an outward exploration of the planet or the cosmos; an international research effort to sequence and map all of the genes - together known as the genome - of members of our species, *Homo sapiens*. Completed in April 2003, the HGP gave us the ability, for the first time, to read nature's complete genetic blueprint for building a human being."

Most of the major science journals reported on the progress in the field of genetics, but also speculated on how the information would now be used. The one piece of information that never materialized from the Human Genome Project was the identification of the so-called "gay gene."

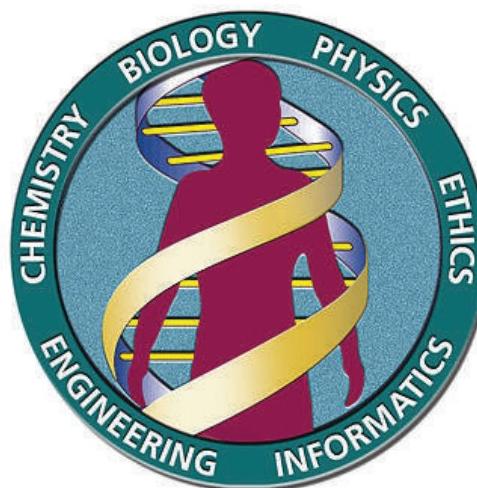
Medical Consequence:

There are numerous studies on the physical and medical consequences of homosexual behavior; however, I would summarize these in the following. Death and disease accompany promiscuous and unsanitary sexual activity.

Seventy percent [15] to 78% [16] of gays reported having had a sexually transmitted disease. The proportion with intestinal parasites, worms, flukes, and amoeba ranged from 25% [17] to 39% [18] to 59% [19-20], respectively. Almost all HIV cases among young males in the U.S. attributable to homosexual behavior according to the Centers For Disease Control's latest survey that found that "In 2009, 91% of adolescent males and 89% of young adult males had diagnosed infections that were attributed to male-to-male sexual contact." [21] In addition to AIDS, there is a long list of maladies attendant upon the homosexually active population. Of particular concern is anal cancer. According to J. R. Daling et.al [22], the risk of anal cancer soars by 4,000 percent among those who engage in anal intercourse.

Conclusions:

Despite the recent trends and media frenzy to portray the alternative lifestyles as natural, genetically, hormonally or biologically stimulated, there is no scientific evidence to that effect. In fact, all the scientific evidence negates these notions and there are severe medical consequences associated with a homosexual lifestyle. The world has been hampered for too long with the idea that people are "born gay". The people who most need to hear the truth are those who mistakenly believe that they have no chance for change. It is both more compassionate and truthful to give them hope than to serve them up politically motivated, unproven creations like the difference in brain structure, hormonal imbalance during pregnancy or, worst of all, the "gay gene."



References:

1. Freud, Sigmund (1956). On Sexuality. Penguin Books Ltd.
2. D.F. Swaab, and E. Fliers. A sexually dimorphic nucleus in the human brain, *Science* 228: (1985) 1112.
3. L.S. Allen, M. Hines, J.E. Shryne and R.A. Gorski, Two sexually dimorphic cell groups in the human brain, *J. Neurosci.* 9 (1989) 497.
4. S.LeVay, A difference in hypothalamic structure between heterosexual and homosexual men, *Science* 253 (1991) 1034.
5. D. Gelman, Is This Child Gay? Born or Bred: The Origins of Homosexuality. *Newsweek* September 9, 1991, p. 52.
6. W. Byne, S. Tobet, L. A. Mattiace, M. S. Lasco, E. Kemether, M. A. Edgar, S. Morgello, M. S. Buchsbaum, and L. B. Jones, The interstitial nuclei of the human anterior hypothalamus: an investigation of variation with sex, sexual orientation, and HIV status. *Horm. Behav.* 40 (2001) 86.
7. J.T. Manning, D. Scutt, J. Wilson and D. I. Lewis-Jones., The ratio of 2nd to 4th digit length: a predictor of sperm numbers and concentrations of testosterone, luteinizing hormone and oestrogen. *Human Reproduction* 13 (1998) 3000.
8. T.J. Williams, M. E. Pepitone, S. E. Christensen, B. M. Cooke, A. D. Huberman, N. J. Breedlove, T. J. Breedlove, C. L. Jordan, and S. M. Breedlove. Finger-length ratios and sexual orientation. *Nature* 404 (2000) 455.
9. N. McConaghay, D. Hadzi-Pavlovic, C. Stevens, V. Manicavasagar, N. Buhrich, and U. Vollmer-Conna. Fraternal birth order and ratio of heterosexual/homosexual feelings in women and men. *J. Homosex.* 51 (2006) 161.
10. L. Frisén, A. Nordenström, H. Falhammar, H. Filipsson, G. Holmdahl, P.O. Janson, M. Thorén, K. Hagenfeldt, A. Möller, A. Nordenskjöld., Gender role behavior, sexuality, and psychosocial adaptation in women with congenital adrenal hyperplasia due to CYP21A2 deficiency. *J. Clin. Endocrinol. Metab.* 94 (2009) 3432.
11. C. Ciomas, A. Linde'n Hirschberg and I. Savic, *Cerebral Cortex* 19: (2009) 1167.
12. D. H. Hamer, S. Hu, V. L. Magnuson, N. Hu, and A. M. Pattatucci. A linkage between DNA markers on the X chromosome and male sexual orientation. *Science* 261 (1993).321.
13. George Rice, Carol Anderson, Neil Risch, and George Ebers, "Male Homosexuality: Absence of Linkage to Microsatellite Markers at Xq28," *Science*, 284 (1999) 665.
14. www.genome.gov/10001772 (October 5, 2013).
15. Robert L. Spitzer, "Can Some Gay Men and Lesbians Change Their Sexual Orientation?", *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 32, No. 5, October 2003: 403-417
16. J. Elisabeth Wells, Magnus A. McGee and Annette L. Beautrais, "Multiple Aspects of Sexual Orientation: Prevalence and Sociodemographic Correlates in a New Zealand National Survey", *Archives of Sexual Behaviour*, Vol. 40 No. 1 (2011) 155.
17. Harold W. Jaffe, Choi Keewhan, Pauline A. Thomas, Harry W. Haverkos, David M. Auerbach, "National case-control study of Kaposi's sarcoma and *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia in homosexual men: Part 1, Epidemiologic results." *Annals Of Internal Medicine* 99, no. 2 (August 1983): 145.
18. Thomas C. Quinn, Walter E. Stamm, Steven E. Goodell, Emanuel Mkrtchian, Jacqueline Benedetti, Lawrence Corey, Michael D. Schuffler, King K. Holmes, "The polymicrobial origin of intestinal infection in homosexual men." *New England Journal of Medicine* 309, no. 10 (September 8, 1983): 576.
19. Robert J. Biggar, Mads Melbye, Peter Ebbesen, Dean L. Mann, James J. Goedert, Robert Weinstock, Douglas M. Strong, William A. Blattner, "Low T-lymphocyte ratios in homosexual men: Epidemiologic evidence for a transmissible agent." *Journal of The American Medical Association* 251, no. 11 (March 15, 1984): 1441.
20. John E. Rigdon, "Overcoming a deep-rooted reluctance, more firms advertise to gay community." *The Wall Street Journal* (July 18, 1991): B-1.
21. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Diagnoses of HIV infection and AIDS among adolescents and young adults in the United States and 5 U.S. dependent areas, 2006–2009. HIV Surveillance Supplemental Report 2012; 17(No. 2). Published January 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/topics/surveillance/resources/reports/>.
22. Janet R. Daling, Noel S. Weiss, Larry L. Klopferstein; Leah E. Cochran; Wong Ho Chow, Richard Daifuku, "Correlates of Homosexual Behavior and the Incidence of Anal Cancer," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 247, no.14, 9 April 1982, pp. 1988.

Terms & Definitions:

Sexual dimorphism: The condition in which the males and females in a species are morphologically different.

Hypothalamus: is a portion of the brain that contains a number of small nuclei with a variety of functions. One of the most important functions of the hypothalamus is to link the nervous system to the endocrine system

A neuron is an electrically excitable cell that processes and transmits information through electrical and chemical signals.

In signal processing and related disciplines, aliasing refers to an effect that causes different signals to become indistinguishable (or aliases of one another).

A hormone is a chemical released by a cell, a gland, or an organ in one part of the body that affects cells in other parts of the organism.

Testosterone is a steroid hormone from the androgen group and is found in mammals, reptiles, birds, and other vertebrates.

Luteinizing hormone is a hormone produced by gonadotroph cells

Estrogens or oestrogens are a group of compounds named for their importance in both menstrual and estrous reproductive cycles.

Androgen, also called androgenic hormone or testoid, is the generic term for any natural or synthetic compound, usually a steroid hormone, that stimulates or controls the development and maintenance of male characteristics

Congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) refers to any of several autosomal recessive diseases resulting from mutations of genes for enzymes mediating the biochemical steps of production of cortisol from cholesterol

In the womb

The observable physical or biochemical characteristics of an organism, as determined by both genetic makeup and environmental influences.

A chromosome is an organized structure of DNA, protein, and RNA found in cells.

Etiology is the study of causation, or origination.

In genetics, **a locus** (plural loci) is the specific location of a gene or DNA sequence or position on a chromosome.

Subtelomeres are segments of DNA between telomeric caps and chromatin.

LOD score: In genetics, a statistical estimate of whether two loci are likely to lie near each other on a chromosome and are therefore likely to be inherited together as a package

In modern molecular biology and genetics, **the genome** is the entirety of an organism's hereditary information.



By Rabia Khan

MARRIAGE AND CHASTITY

How can they go together?

Marriage and chastity are inextricably linked because the success of one is dependent on the success of the other. Chastity is defined as: 1) To abstain from extramarital relations or all relations; 2) To have pure conduct and intent; and 3) To have restraint and simplicity in design and expression(1). I am going to link these definitions to the sphere of married life.

The clearest definition is the abstention of extramarital relations. In relation to the concept of marriage, commitment to your chosen partner is the goal. In Islam, in the physical sense, responsible fulfillment of desires is achieved through marriage and humans are given the code of conduct for life that has a very chaste outlook. Extramarital relations are simply not permitted, and we are encouraged to not tread on pathways that lead to immodest conduct. I will expand upon this later on.

In the history of religion I will describe one example of a woman with pure conduct and intent. Hadrat Maryam(ra) was a chaste woman and had a righteousness unequal to any woman in history, so much so that she is revered in Islam for her shining qualities. The story of the Virgin Mary and the birth of the Prophet Jesus(as) is one of the most interesting events of all time. Her mother dedicated her to serve God before she was born, and God promised that she would be a faithful servant, and this she certainly was. Her child went on to be a prophet of God. It was divine favor that allowed this miraculous birth to occur but her righteousness and positive upbringing that made her the choice for a future prophet's mother. How many mothers have this in their list of achievements? Her righteousness was apparent at a young age, which was her good conduct witnessed by her guardian, Zachariah, and in fact her godliness incited him to recite the prayer "My Lord, grant me from Thyself pure offspring; surely, Thou art the Hearer of prayer"(2). This prayer he recited at an old age when it was an improbability that he and his wife could conceive; however, it sprung from Mary's outstanding qualities. Her piety was also reaffirmed due to the amazing qualities of her parents, about whom the Israelites declared,



"thy father was not a wicked man, nor was thy mother an unchaste woman!"(3) The Prophet Jesus(as), having Maryam(ra) as a mother, must have acquired some blessings from her prayerfulness because he had outstanding qualities at a young age. He spoke with wisdom and adopted a life close to God which became a blessing for all ages. Regarding his mother he said, "And He has made me dutiful towards my mother, and has not made me arrogant and graceless".(4) How could such a pious person be the result of an unchaste act? The fact that her chastity was known, made Mary(ra) wonder: "How can I have a son when no man has touched me, neither have I been unchaste?"(5) If a woman is unchaste, it is difficult to determine who the father of the child is, but in Hadraat Maryam's(ra) case, because no man had touched her it had to be a divine blessing upon her. Modern science has examples of asexual reproduction and in her case this is what happened because God was very clear that it was to be a miraculous birth.

One solid way Muslims can keep their chastity intact is the exercise of the veil or covering known as 'purdah' in Islam. Don't be mistaken, men have to practice this too; they are practicing the veil of their eyes, and their egos to some extent. They cannot go about strutting their physique and their handsome qualities, because they are similarly required to dress modestly. In a woman's case, apart from her hands, feet and face, her body must be covered, including her hair, because in terms of beauty, these things may attract unwanted attention. In some cases Muslim women cover their faces also if they are in a situation that requires them to do so. The bottom line is negligence of these practices can destroy the armor of even the purest of intent and conduct, as human nature is attracted to beauty.

Apart from 'purdah', another way to protect chastity is to avoid all paths leading towards immodesty. The Holy Prophet(sa) said that when a man and a women are alone together, Satan is the third. The wisdom in this is for men and women to avoid close contact with each other, which may lead to further complicated situations. Marriage is a way to promote chastity and desist from adultery and fornication. Above all, seeking Allah's help grants the person strength and righteousness, like the example of Prophet Joseph(as). When the wife of the Egyptian who housed him tried to seduce him, he literally raced to the door saying, "I seek refuge with Allah. He is my Lord."(6) Joseph(as) was very well aware of the pitfalls of his situation and knew he had to act fast in order to desist from being seduced.

In the examples of Hadrat Maryam(ra) and Hadrat Joseph(as) above we have talked about the purity of a person's conduct. Now let's turn to how to avoid extramarital relations and how to make a marriage work, bearing in mind that in Islam, a healthy marriage is the cornerstone of family life. A man and a woman are not required to stay celibate their whole lives, and Mary(ra) also married. Also let's not confuse the concepts of monogamy, polygamy and chastity. In Islam, a man can have up to, but no more than four wives, and a woman can have one husband. Up to the point of marriage, a Muslim needs to stay celibate, and once married, must not have extramarital relations. Where chastity comes into play in terms of marriage is that the person is not permitted to go about having affairs with someone who is not their spouse. If a married couple keeps watch over their 'purdah' in all dealings with friends, and work colleagues, it inspires confidence and trust within the married couple. The willingness to protect oneself by covering one's physical attractions strengthens the marriage and helps keep the couple faithful to one another. Also a married couple must also not sacrifice their morals by treading the paths of immodesty. The Holy Quran describes the marriage contract as *ihsan* which literally means fortress, the man *muhsin*, which means he builds a fortress, and the woman or the *muhsinah*, which means that

she has come into the protection of the fort(7). Any threat to modesty would weaken the carefully built fort.

Just like when the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) was revealed the teachings of Islam, to impart to the then barbaric nation of Arabia, our moral qualities change our natural instincts. So the nation of Arabia ate, drank, and enjoyed extramarital relationships whenever they so desired. However, the religion of Islam changed these people and they were the same people whose unbridled passions were turned into the highest moral qualities found in a man, greater than angels. It is the honing of these natural states, maturation, and harnessing them that makes the base state of man into a pious human being. The first reform is from barbarians to following some simple societal rules. The second reform is to begin practicing some moral qualities. And the third reform is spiritual power granted to the person. Chastity is *ihsan* in Arabic, and it involves discarding evil as discussed above. This is practicing a moral quality in order to reach an ultimate goal. Marriage is following a level of societal rules, in order to enhance your chance of living a chaste life. And, you would also discard some evils to reach that end goal. These are not letting your eyes rove freely around and gaze unchecked at the attractive features of the opposite sex, not listen to their voices, not pay heed to descriptions of their good looks, avoiding occasions where your passions can get the best of you and you have little hope of escaping unchaste acts without a prayer to God to save you, and finally, to practice methods that promote celibacy when in the period of celibacy. These include fasting and dieting.(8) The methods don't stop there. Exercise is effective, as is not subjecting oneself to lewd internet and television movies that have no respect for modesty. The final important point is a level of respect for your marriage needs to be developed in your heart that spurs you on to protect it at all costs; may all enjoy a blissful eternal union. Amen.



References:

1. March 23rd 2015 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chastity>
2. The Holy Quran ch 3 v 39
3. Ch19 v 29
4. Ch 19 v 33
5. Ch 19 v 21
6. Ch12 v 24
7. Lajna Imaillah USA (1996) Pathway to Paradise
8. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1896) The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam



SPIRITUAL TREASURES

BOOKS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH(as)

"British Government and Jihad"

Reviewed by Naveed Ahmed Malik, Washington DC

Year Written: 1900

Year Published: 1900 (English 2006)

Number of Pages in English: 41

Serial Number: Ruhani Khaza'in, Vol. 17, Book no. 1

"I have come to you with an order: Jihad with the sword has ended from this time forward, but the jihad of purifying your souls must continue."

Promised Messiah
"British Government and Jihad"

At the time of this writing, vicious bands of Afghan tribals were waging violence in northern India. Decades earlier, in 1857, thousands of Muslims led a nationalist revolt against British rule, mislabeling it jihad. Today, 115 years after the publication of this order, violent extremist groups such as ISIS, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram routinely make the news for despicable acts of terror, which they also erroneously dub as jihad.

But for each of these headliners there are several others, including, but not limited to: Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Ansar al-Sharia (Libya, Tunisia), Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (Egypt), Army of Islam (Gaza), al-Nusra Front (Lebanon, Syria), Islamic Defenders Front (Indonesia), Indian Mujahideen (India), and Ansaru (Nigeria)—dotted around the Muslim world. Nationalist violence, which grew from colonial rule, and was mislabeled jihad, has persisted since the time of the Promised Messiah(as), and has never been more controversial or threatening to the interests of peace, order and harmony.

Simply denouncing acts of terror committed in the name of Islam is no longer enough, because even many of those clerics who support violence denounce the acts publicly. But others are yet bolder and publicly preach that

violence and aggression are central Islamic tenets. Critics of Islam, in turn, latch on to these twisted interpretations in order to attack Islam, as evidenced by Graeme Wood's much-publicized Atlantic Monthly piece, "What ISIS Really Wants" (March 2015 issue). Therefore, an intelligent defense of Islam is required, which clearly explains the true teachings of Islam with regard to jihad, exposes false teachings and propaganda, and proposes a solution to religiously motivated violence.

This is precisely what we find in the book under discussion. Viewed against the backdrop of the evils committed by such entities, misguidance spread by ignorant clerics, and the scathing vitriol of anti-Islamic critics, "British Government and Jihad" is perhaps one of the most important books written by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) for the present time. This concise treatise effectively refutes the basis upon which violent extremist groups align themselves with Islamic teachings. It also posits a theory for why such violence occurs, and posits a reasonable solution. We will look at these three aspects of this book in this review.

True Jihad

The author begins this treatise by explaining the lexical meaning of the word "jihad," which comes from the root juhd, and means to strive. He then explains its meaning in Islam, as evidenced by the practice of jihad in the lifetime of the Founder of Islam, the Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa). What clearer definition can one have of what jihad truly is, than to look to the Holy Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet(saw)? By doing so, the Promised Messiah(as) illustrates that the taking up of arms can only be defensive in nature, and even then after a number of strict conditions are met.

Violent Extremism Today

The author also provides two reasons for why violent acts couched as jihad have become widespread: one, the preaching of ignorant and low-minded Muslim clerics who do not understand (nor wish to understand) the true meaning of jihad; and two, Christian evangelists who spread false propaganda about Islam.

The first reason is without controversy, as even today many clerics preach violence, but let us look at why mere denunciation is insufficient according to the author. On page 8 we read:

"When these maulvis meet present day rulers, they bow down as if ready to prostrate; but among their own kind they insist repeatedly that this country [British India] is *dar-ul-harb* [the zone of war]. They consider jihad to be obligatory in their hearts, and few of them think otherwise. They adhere so strongly to their doctrine of jihad—which is completely misguided and entirely contradicts the teachings of the Holy Quran and hadith—that they label as *dajjal* [Antichrist] and advocate the murder of anyone who objects" (p. 8).

Even more intriguing is the role of Christian evangelists in provoking violence by Muslims. The author writes:

In my opinion, the second cause of this criminal bloodshed, which is carried out in the hopes of becoming a ghazi, is the preaching of Christian priests who have widely publicized the claim that jihad is compulsory in Islam. They claim that killing people of other faiths is a matter of great Islamic virtue. I believe that the people of the Frontier Region were not even aware of this doctrine until the Christian priests embedded it in their minds. My view is supported by the fact that there were no incidents of this type before Christian priests began the distribution of journals, newspapers and books in the Frontier Region. In fact, ordinary Muslims and the people of the Frontier Region were very pleased when the British replaced the previous Sikh Government. In 1849, Reverend Pfander published his book *Mizan-ul-Haq* in India, the Punjab and the Frontier Region. In it, he used offensive language to attack Islam and its Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and publicized the claim that killing people of other faiths is not merely permitted but is in fact considered to be worthy of great Divine reward in Islam. This drew the attention of the barbaric people of the Frontier Region (who have no knowledge of their religion) and they came to believe that Islam advocates the killing of non-Muslims. (pp. 24–25)

This is a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts, as hateful speech incites naïve Muslims to violence, and even today we find many examples of hateful speech against Islam and provocation of Muslims, couched as "free speech."

Solution for Peace

The Promised Messiah(as), after explaining the true meaning of jihad and the reasons for violence in the name of Islam, posits a number of potential solutions. First and foremost, he completely denounces these acts, and explains how they are un-Islamic. He clearly forbids all Muslims from engaging in violence:

"Now that the Promised Messiah has come, it is the duty of every Muslim to refrain from such jihad. There could have been some justification for misunderstanding this issue if I had not come. But I have arrived and you have witnessed the day that was promised. Therefore, those who now raise the sword on religion's behalf have no excuse before God Almighty."

He suggests that the Emir of Kabul should do the same by gathering all the clerics for a conference on the true nature of jihad, and publish pamphlets to that end in Pashto, to educate the ignorant, and help promote reconciliation between Muslims and Christians.

He also recommends that for a few years, "every group should be strictly forbidden from using vicious language against other religions, be it explicit or implicit, in their writings or in their sermons. They should, however, be permitted to recount the virtues of their own faith. This will prevent the cultivation of new plants of hatred and as ancient tales fade away people will be inclined towards mutual love and reconciliation. When the barbaric people of the Frontier Region see love and friendship grow among nations, then they too will be impressed, and in turn will show as much sympathy towards Christians as one Muslim does to another."

A second suggestion is that if the maulavis of Punjab and India truly oppose this notion of jihad, they should publish journals about it, translate them into the Pashto language, and disseminate them among the tribes of the Frontier Region, for these would certainly prove very effective. However, all this must be done with an honest heart and enthusiasm, not with hypocrisy" (p. 27).

A Way Forward

The Promised Messiah(as) laments that ignorant clerics on one end and hateful evangelists on the other are to blame for violence in the name of Islam. Good governments, like that of the British, are caught in the middle trying to keep the peace. The Promised Messiah(as) writes:

"The books of other ministers, which we need not mention in detail, have also sown seeds of hatred within peoples' hearts, and they have thus proven to be a great obstacle for our noble government's attempts at reconciliation. Our government did act commendably in permitting Muslims to respond to these books, although the Muslims also showed some harshness in their replies. These sharp responses did, nevertheless, serve as a striking testimony to the open-minded nature of the [British] government. The disturbances that could have resulted from these derogatory writings were avoided because of the well-intentioned and fair manner adopted by the government" (pp. 25–26).

That was 115 years ago. Today we see the situation is entirely the same but on a larger and more destructive scale. Cartoons and movies made to mock the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) incite simple-minded Muslims to violence. Even President Obama and other senior government officials reasoned with the once-famous-now-forgotten pastor in Florida who publicized a Quran-burning day not to do so, as it would put American lives in danger, but the pastor proceeded to burn Qurans.

The Promised Messiah(as) thanked the British government for creating an environment where Muslims could practice their faith freely, thus precluding the possibility of a legitimate jihad. And he explained to the simpletons when defensive warfare was allowed (certainly not in his time, or in the present). He suggested civility in order to foster reconciliation. He practiced what he preached, and he used peaceful means to spread his message, giving like-minded individuals and his followers a way forward.

"British Government and Jihad" remains one of the most important books for Muslims and non-Muslims alike, and if the world were to adhere to the teachings and recommendations contained therein, the world would soon see a Muslim world full of peace and stability, not war and disorder. May Allah make it so.

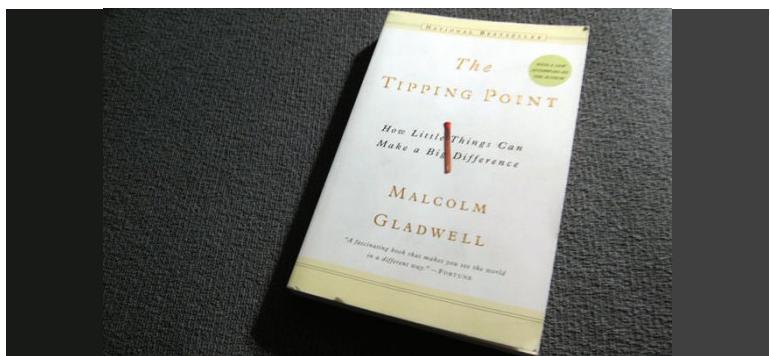


You can download the book at the link below.
www.alislam.org/library/books/BritishGovt-and-Jihad.pdf

EFFECTIVENESS OF LOWERING GAZE AND FASTING

By Imam Rizwan Khan

Our society has taken up different means to control consequences of rampant promiscuity. Different solutions have been attempted, such as mass distribution of contraceptives, sex education on the dangers of Sexually Transmitted Diseases ("STDs"), and civil repercussions for adultery. In addressing society's problems of promiscuity, Islam gives two primary solutions. One is that we lower our gaze and not look at that which can excite carnal desires; In the Holy Quran , Allah commands "Say to the believing men that they restrain their eyes and guard their private parts. That is purer for them. Surely, Allah is well aware of what they do" (24:31). The second is that we observe fasting; the Holy Prophet(sa) said, "O young people! Whoever among you can marry, should marry, because it helps him lower his gaze and guard his modesty, and whoever is not able to marry, should fast, as fasting diminishes his sexual power" (*Bukhari, Kitabun Nika*). The question may arise that how are such apparently insignificant and unheard of solutions are expected to solve such a huge problem? On one hand, teen pregnancies are rampant, single mothers are everywhere, and infidelity is rising, and on the other hand, Islam teaches the lowering of our gaze and fasting, which may seem like irrelevant solutions to the crisis at hand. However, the most effective solution is not always the most obvious one.



In his book *The Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell tells the story of how the NYC subway system was in a state of crisis. Crime had become rampant, robberies were a common fear, and even murders were on the rise. Police had been trying to stop these crimes by dealing with them directly, and had been failing miserably at it. It seemed that the situation was irreversibly descending into chaos. Then, a new police chief was brought in who had a different approach to addressing the crisis. He decided to address two problems;

one problem was that many people would not pay the tolls when entering the subway, and would either jump over the stands or find some other way to bypass them. The second problem was that there was graffiti everywhere, in the subway and on the cars.

First, he stationed police at the toll stands to arrest those who tried to enter without paying. Many of those who were arrested were wanted for other crimes or were repeat offenders. Most of the crimes in the subway were being committed by people who already had an inclination to crime. By preventing those who did not pay the toll from entering, the subway system was purged of much of its criminal element. The implementing of one seemingly minor preventative measure had solved the greater part of a major problem.

Secondly, he had all of the graffiti removed. The presence of graffiti everywhere conveyed incompetence on the part of the government, that since those who ran the subway had no control over its appearance and could not prevent it from being vandalized, therefore they had no control to stop other crimes that happened there either. It was a manifestation of the 'broken window theory', where the lack of repercussions for one crime created an environment of lawlessness that provoked a myriad of other crimes. When a person with criminal inclinations came into the subway, the prevalence of crime all over the walls and cars created an environment that promoted further crime and made accountability appear unlikely. However, when the graffiti was removed, the subway actually began looking like an official government facility wherein government laws were enforced. As a result, just by removing the graffiti, those with criminal inclinations who came into the subway found an environment that was much less conducive to lawlessness. Rather, its orderliness conveyed the presence of government authority.

Simply by implementing the seemingly minor solution of removing graffiti, whatever criminal activity had not been prevented from entering at the toll stands was neutralized by the orderly environment in the subway. Thus, the crisis of crime in the NYC subway system was solved by the most effective means, prevention: by preventing criminal elements from entering the subway system, and then by neutralizing whatever criminal tendencies were present before they could surface.

Similarly, lowering our gaze and fasting, though they may seem insignificant, are extremely effective when it comes to purification of the heart. Lowering our gaze keeps the source of immoral thoughts from entering our minds. Every immoral thought is triggered by a stimulant, whether it be something we see or something we think of. When a person is in the habit of repeatedly looking at things that excite his sexual desires, it is inevitable that he will more often be in a state of arousal. This state then leads to actions for the culmination of those desires, actions that are usually misplaced and immoral. The teaching of lowering our gaze stops this process before it has opportunity to begin. If we constantly permit immoral stimulants to enter our minds, our thoughts will inevitably become more and more perverse. Islam teaches us the most effective solution to the problem of immorality: prevention. By teaching us to lower our gaze, the problem of immorality is cut at its root. Islam teaches us to prevent the stimulant that would trigger the thought from ever entering our mind.

Thus, our eyes are like toll stands for our minds, and by lowering our gaze, we prevent harmful elements from even entering our thoughts, elements that would invariably cause chaos if given free rein to influence our minds. In NYC, most of the problem was solved just by preventing those who did not pay the tolls from entering the subway system. This was because most of the people responsible for crime did not pay the tolls, and so with a seemingly minor solution, the problem was cut at its root. Thus, by filtering out the criminals, crime automatically went away. Similarly, most immoral thoughts are triggered by unnecessary stimulants that we have allowed to enter our minds. If we prevent these stimulants from entering our minds, most immoral thoughts go away on their own. To persist in looking at things that are a source of arousal and to simultaneously hope to stop sexual thoughts is a futile effort.



Fasting creates an environment in our body that neutralizes the harmful effects of whatever immoral thoughts do come to our mind. When we have too much energy in our bodies, it needs some sort of an outlet; you can't give a child sugar and expect him to sit still. Just as in NYC, the graffiti in the subway system created an environment that encouraged crime, similarly, excess energy in our bodies creates an environment that multiplies the negative effects of the negative stimulants and thoughts in our minds. It is as if our thoughts are sparks and the excess food we consume is like flammable fuel. In NYC, without graffiti, there was a disciplined environment that encouraged law and order in the subway system. Even if a person had criminal inclinations, the orderly surroundings and atmosphere discouraged and neutralized such thoughts. Similarly, by fasting we reduce the amount of excess energy in our bodies. This creates an environment in our bodies that neutralizes the harmful effects of immoral thoughts even if they do occur and prevents them from starting the process towards their consummation. In this way, excess and unused energy is like graffiti within our bodies that creates an environment that provokes immorality. By fasting, whatever harmful thoughts were able to make it past the toll stands of our eyes are not further instigated by the chaos within us but are neutralized by the harmony in our bodies.

Simply because these solutions, that Islam gives, do not address the results of promiscuity that are before us, it does not mean that these solutions do not address the problem. Lowering of the gaze and fasting are preventative measure that, if put into action, bring about a revolutionary change. This does not mean that Islam does not give teachings to address the harmful effects of promiscuity more directly, but prevention is where the primary emphasis lies. The teachings of Islam may not be the most obvious solutions to life's problems, but they are the most effective.



HOMOSEXUALITY:

Dr. Ijaz A. Rauf, Ph.D.

A Review of Social, Psychological and Moral Facts

The religious verdict about homosexuality is pretty clear; it is considered a sin and invites the wrath of Almighty God. The story of Lot(as) in all Abrahamic religions speaks volumes about the destruction of a whole nation because of such acts as is recorded in their holy scriptures (e.g., the Torah, Bible and Quran). The Holy Quran, which Muslims consider to be the apex of religious revelation, records the following about the people of Lot and their behavior:

"And we sent Lot, when he said to his people, 'Do you commit an abomination such as no one in the world ever did before you? You approach men with lust instead of women. Nay, you are a people who exceed all bounds.'" [1]

And at another place the Holy Quran states:

"Do you, of all peoples, approach males, and leave your wives whom your Lord has created for you? Nay, you are a people who transgress.' They said, 'If thou desist not, O Lot, thou wilt surely be one of the banished ones.' He said, 'Certainly I hate your practice. My Lord, save me and my family from what they do.' So We saved him and his family, all of them, save an old woman among those who stayed behind. Then We destroyed the others." [2]

And biblical teaching are clear from these two verses in Leviticus: "Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman; it is an abhorrence" [3] and "If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an abhorrent thing; they shall be put to death—their bloodguilt is upon them" [4].



The traditional and the right wing religious view is that homosexuality is a malformation, a disorder, and pathological behavior. Regardless of where one stands on the pleasure-relational aspects of man and woman's sexuality is inextricably associated with reproduction, and two members of the same sex cannot reproduce. Therefore, homosexuality is a condition that is contrary to nature, in a fundamental way. Biologically, it is simply not natural or normal.

Conflicting with the above viewpoint, much of the current media sources assume the question is a solved scientific problem with all the evidence pointing toward a biological (probably genetic) basis for a homosexual orientation. The homosexual community with tremendous support from the media has been very successful in gaining acceptance for the second view to the extent that they have been successful in forcing the medical community to remove it from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders.

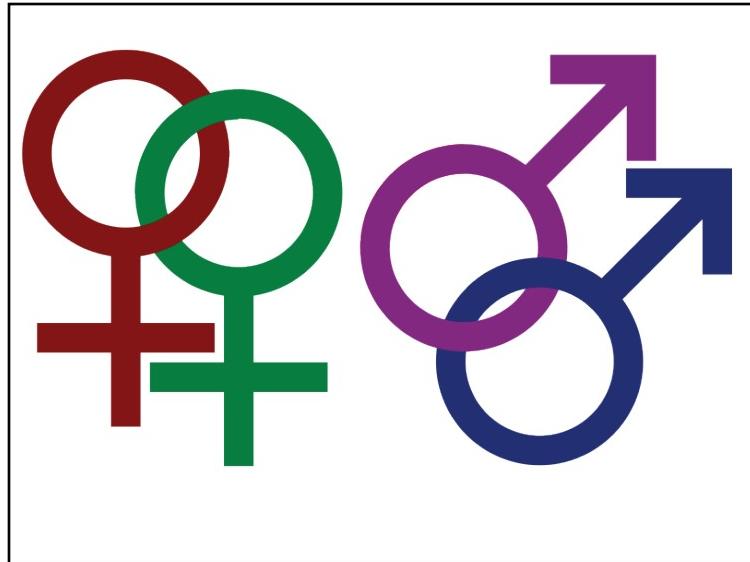
Psychological Disorder: The removal of homosexuality as a designation from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders by the American Psychiatric Association has kept many physicians from attempting to provide reparative therapy to homosexuals. However, Columbia University Professor of Psychiatry Dr. Robert Spitzer, who was instrumental in removing homosexuality in 1973 from the list of mental disorders, published a study in 2003 and contended that people can change their "sexual orientation" from homosexual to heterosexual [5]. Spitzer interviewed more than 200 people, most of whom claimed that through reparative therapy counseling, their desires for same-sex partners either diminished significantly or they changed over to heterosexual orientation. Although still a proponent of homosexual activism, Spitzer has been attacked unmercifully by former admirers for this breach of the ideology that people are "born gay and can't change."

Another study of 13,000 New Zealand adults (age 16+) examined sexual orientation as a function of childhood history [18]. The study found a 3-fold higher prevalence of childhood abuse for those who subsequently engaged in same sex sexual activity. However, childhood abuse was not a major factor in homosexuality, since only 15% of homosexuals had experienced abuse as children (compared with 5% among heterosexuals) [6]. So, it would appear from this population that only a small percentage of homosexuality (~10%) might be explained by early childhood abusive experiences.

The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH) released the results of a two-year study in 2000. This research effort concluded that before treatment, 68 percent of the respondents perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, with another 22 percent stating that they were more homosexual than heterosexual. After treatment, only 13 percent perceived themselves as exclusively or almost entirely homosexual, while 33 percent described themselves as either exclusively or almost entirely

heterosexual [7]. Although 83 percent of respondents indicated that they entered therapy primarily because of homosexuality, 99 percent of those who participated in the survey said they now believe that psychological treatments to change homosexuality can be effective and valuable [7].

So what really is the origin of Homosexuality? There are psychological influences that affect different people differently and a lot of fundamental research is being conducted on positive as well as negative aspects of psychological influences [8-10]. Let's explore the answer to above question in the words of professed homosexuals. Two large studies asked homosexual respondents to explain the origins of their desires and behaviors - how they "got that way." Kinsey's study of the late 1940s involved 1,700 homosexuals [11-12], and Gebhard's study [13] in 1970s, involved 979 homosexuals. Both were conducted prior to the period when the "gay rights" movement started to politicize the issue of homosexual origins. Both reported essentially the same findings: Homosexuals overwhelmingly believed their feelings and behavior were the result of social or environmental influences.



There is also evidence that homosexuality, like drug use is "handed down" from older individuals. The first homosexual encounter is usually initiated by an older person. In separate studies 60%, [14] 64%, [13] and 61% [15] of the respondents claimed that their first partner was someone older who initiated the sexual experience. Extremely shy and artistic young boys, for instance, who are not affirmed in their masculinity by a caring father, might be at risk for homosexuality. It's not because of a homosexual "gene," but because of an interrupted process of achieving secure gender identity. This can make some boys who crave male affirmation an easy mark for seduction into homosexuality. A similar pattern can be seen in girls who don't fit classic gender profiles, need feminine affirmation, and are targeted by lesbians who play upon the girls' emotional needs.

What influences cause strong homosexual desires? No one answer is acceptable to all researchers in the field. Important factors, however, seem to fall into four categories. As with so many other odd sexual tendencies, males appear especially susceptible:

1. Homosexual experience: any homosexual experience in childhood, especially if it is a first sexual experience or with an adult, any homosexual contact with an adult, particularly with a relative or authority figure.
2. Family abnormality: a dominant, possessive, or rejecting mother, an absent, distant, or rejecting father, a parent with homosexual proclivities, the lack of a religious home environment, divorce, condoning homosexuality as a legitimate lifestyle – welcoming homosexuals (e.g., co-workers, friends) into the family circle.
3. Unusual sexual experience, particularly in early childhood: precocious or excessive masturbation, exposure to pornography in childhood.
4. Cultural influences: a visible and socially approved homosexual sub-culture that invites curiosity and encourages exploration, pro-homosexual sex education, openly homosexual authority figures, such as teachers, societal and legal toleration of homosexual acts, depictions of homosexuality as normal and/or desirable behavior.

Self-Control and Reformation Required to Ensure Survival of Species:

Self-Control and Reformation Required to Ensure Survival of Species: The problem of the human species' survival is eternal and, at the same time, the most urgent of all problems. It lies at the heart of the philosophical questions of man's place and destination in a world that is being discovered and transformed in the name of humanity, the highest of all values. The main goal of social development is the formation of human abilities and the creation of the most favourable conditions for human self-expression and spiritual elevation.

There are a number of human characteristics that we have no control over, for example, who someone's parents are going to be, what will be child's sex at birth, color of eyes, hair and there are many other similar attributes that can be cited including people being born disabled. Advancements in genetic engineering have aims to develop processes to even control that, some of which can be beneficial to the human race; for example, the correction of disabilities by genetic modification. However, there are a number of things people develop through influence of their surrounding environment, such as communications (what language they will speak depends on which family they are born in) they develop this skill way before they even become aware of the functions of their sexual organs.

All human behavioral drives are instinctive. Individual human behavior is in response to these basic instincts as modified by the human intellect. The intellectual (moral, ethical) human controls its behavior by augmenting those social drives which correspond to its moral, cultural and spiritual beliefs and diminishing those drives which are contrary. The drive for sex is one of the strongest of the human instincts, often over-riding even the instinct for survival of the self since the survival of the species is the paramount consideration.

A human child is born at the most primitive of the animal states, but with tremendous ability to understand and learn from the environment surrounding him/her. A detailed discussion on "The Physical, Moral and Spiritual States of Man" is eloquently examined in the booklet "Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam" [16] by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as), the Promised Messiah. Discussing this very primitive state of a human being, Hadrat Ahmad(as) elaborates:

"The first spring which is the source of all natural states is designated by the Holy Quran as the *Nafs-e-Ammarah*, which means the self that incites to evil." He further explains this state saying, "Thus, the propensity towards evil and intemperance is a human state which predominates over the mind of a person before he enters upon the moral state. This is man's natural state, so long as he is not guided by reason and understanding but follows his natural bent (instincts) in eating, drinking, sleeping, waking, anger and provocation, like the animals."

An intellectual being is one that uses intellectual control (self-discipline) to augment desirable instinctive behavior and to minimize inappropriate instinctive behavior. Through reason, the moral (intellectual, ethical) human searches out and exhibits a behavior which optimizes species survival on earth for eternity.

There are three elements in sexual reproduction which are required in the human species for the species' survival. These must be held sacred by the individuals in the species and are: the joining of adult male and female in a cooperative unit (wedlock), and in earnest commitment, for rearing the young; the mating of the adult male and female for producing children; and the joint care of the child by the parents in full cooperation from conception to self-sufficiency, each parent performing their respective duties. When these three elements are conducted under intellectual control, the one element that distinguishes the humans from other species, they are then moral, ethical and spiritual. Any human behavior which diminishes the positive effect of these functions in any way is, therefore, unethical and immoral.



Modern society is infecting our minds, and everything we do, and forcing us to abide by certain social trends. We are pressured to accept all variations in lifestyle as normal and natural. In the name of freedom, the unrestricted mingling of opposite sexes in the modern society has resulted in increased promiscuity. The consequence is that the physical sex that nature developed in all mammals, for reproduction, is losing its charm for the modern human beings. The unrestrained modern human is becoming sexually bizarre in pursuit of pleasure ridden lifestyles. In the animal kingdom sex for any other reason than procreation is unobserved. Sex for that reason among modern humans is becoming rare. Sexual pleasure has been shown to be chemical in nature. Sexual activity increases the chemical flow. Unconventional sex, as practiced by many of the modern human beings, is an addictive, useless, costly, troublesome, wasteful, and disease ridden practice with no redeeming feature. The rise of homosexuality is thus a direct outcome of human moral degradation in pursuit of pleasures.

The collective sexual instincts of humans are in great disarray and quite contrary to the survival of the species. It is, therefore, necessary for each human to exercise a strong intellectual control over its sexual instincts. To do so is moral and spiritual; not to do so is immoral and unethical. To judge the morality of a particular act is to assess that act with respect to the optimum survivability of the species and individuals. If it harms, or is likely to harm, others or itself, then it is immoral; suicide and assisted suicide is still illegal in almost all human societies and civilizations of the world. The degree of immorality is directly proportional to the severity of the harm and/or its likelihood.

The repercussions of promiscuity are also very visible through modern media. Divorce rates are sky-rocketing and courts are filled with cases arguing over child responsibility. Most child abuse cases involve step-parents or live-in lovers. Child murder and abandonment are no longer rare occurrences in modern societies. Most family murders are the result of sexual promiscuity. Homosexuality is an act that endangers the survival of the human race itself, besides harming the individuals involved with a variety of diseases and eventual death without offspring.

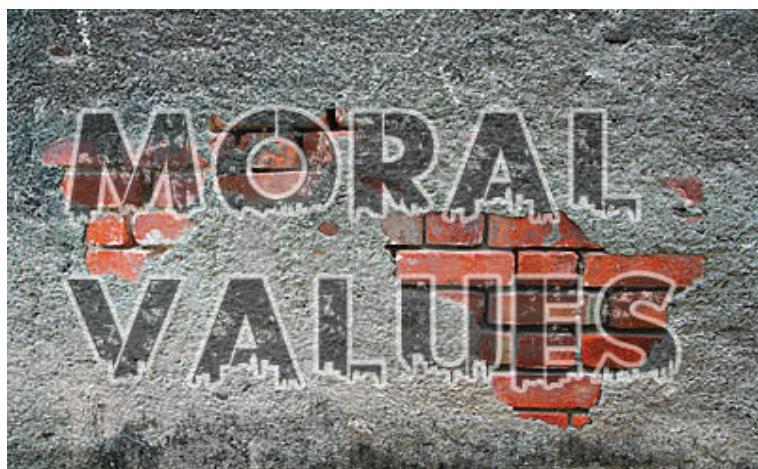
When a person is guided by reason and understanding and brings his natural state under control and regulates it in a proper manner, then the three states, as described, cease to remain the categories as natural states, but are called moral states [16]. The sole purpose for the creation of mankind and bestowing intelligence upon it, as per the Islamic teachings, is to use that talent to find its Creator through His attributes and by truly knowing those attributes man will be compelled to worship Him as it is stated in the Holy Quran: "And I have not created the Jinn and men but that they may worship Me [17]." Hence by doing so, it rises above the animal self and can reach a stage when the soul of a person being delivered from all weaknesses is filled with spiritual powers and establishes a living relationship with God Almighty without Whose support it cannot exist [16].

The Holy Quran beautifully elaborates the purpose of creating mates in the following verse: "O ye people! Fear your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and created therefrom its mate, and from them twain spread many men and women; and fear Allah, in Whose name you appeal to one another, and fear Him particularly respecting ties of relationship. Verily, Allah watches over you [18]." Thus the private sexual acts committed between a wedded couple for the purpose of procreation and for strengthening the family bond are moral and spiritual. They ensure the survival of the species beyond the lives of the individuals involved and a source of peace for the couple and are exactly for the purpose they are created as mates for each other.

Contrary to this when a human being is enslaved to primitive pleasure bound instincts; it continues to degrade itself, however with no satisfaction to the extent of falling below the animal self that it was born at. Homosexuality, incest and other similar unconventional sexual acts are the direct consequence of such degradation. No society or civilization survives if the individuals within that group do not consistently follow its established rules, i.e., exercises intellectual control over its instincts. Since the sexual instinct is by far the strongest social instinct, a benchmark of the success of a given social or civil group and an indicator of the moral and ethical capability of individuals to contribute to the group, is the sexual discipline of the individuals within that group.

In our time the moral degradation has risen to the extent that some have started to demonstrate worse than animal behavior. Even the animals do not have sexual relationships beyond their own species, while there had been recent court rulings and events where human beings have tied the knot with animals (19-21). Despite courts recently allowing marriages to animals, there is no country in the world where marriage to siblings or within blood relations is allowed. Although all the biological and natural ingredients may be present, the sanctity and purity of blood relations is taught by religion and have served very well for the intellectual and spiritual development of the human race.

However, once a trend is set in motion to deteriorate morality and corrupt human beings to fall from their higher spiritual states, men with strong will power, higher morality and spirituality and leadership qualities are needed to bring human beings back to a higher moral and spiritual state. This has been the practice of the Almighty Creator, at every juncture when immorality and corruption was widespread on earth. He chose men, like Abraham, Noah, Lot, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (peace be upon all of them) and strengthened them with revelation to bring humanity back to Him.



Looking at the moral state of the world we live in, I wonder, is it the time for another reformer? Has the Almighty abandoned the human race? No it cannot be so. The light of revelation did shine on Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as) of Qadian. The least, all the pious souls of the earth, owe to their Creator is to thoroughly examine the claims of this caller towards the Creator who rose in our times.

Despite the success of the homosexual lobby in removing homosexuality as a designation from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Psychiatric Disorders there is ample recorded medical evidence that this condition is psychologically treatable and medically amendable.

Homosexual lifestyles are immoral from human standards as they directly threaten the survival of human species on earth, besides harming the individuals involved, with deadly diseases, shortening their lifetime and leaving them without offspring. To ensure survival of the human species for all times to come, the human race needs to exercise self-control that can only come at the current age through individual and societal reformation. As members of the human race we must raise the bar on morality and spirituality within ourselves and expect more from our leaders.

Conclusion: If society opens the floodgates of promiscuity removing all boundaries, where would society draw the line? Who is going to stop humans from degrading themselves to animals living on instincts rather than rising above animal behavior and becoming spiritual human beings? The results could be devastating for the societal peace.

Those who impose upon society that homosexuality is normal and cannot be changed, must acknowledge that the scientific evidence is contrary. Homosexuality could be changed through hormonal therapy and/or reparative therapy and it has proven to effectively work. There might be other treatments for us to consider for this malfunction of human beings which is what we need to concentrate on discovering rather than prohibiting psychiatrists from providing treatment to even those who want to change homosexual behavior



References:

1. Holy Quran, Chapter 7: Verses 81-82.
2. Holy Quran, Chapter 26: Verses 166-173.
3. Bible: Leviticus 18:22
4. Bible: Leviticus 20:13
5. Joseph Nicolosi, A. Dean Byrd, and Richard Potts, "Retrospective Self-reports of Changes in Homosexual Orientation: A Consumer Survey of Conversion Therapy Clients," *Psychological Reports*, 86 (2000) 1071.
6. A. Raj, J.G. Silverman and H. Amaro, The relationship between sexual abuse and sexual risk among high school students: findings from the 1997 Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey, *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 4(2) (2000) 125-134.
7. J.M. Chandy, R.W. Blum and M.D. Resnick, Sexually abused male adolescents: how vulnerable are they? *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 6(2) (1997) 1. D.W. Holder et al. The association between adolescent sexual spirituality and voluntary sexual activity. *J Adolesc Health*;26 (2000) 295.
8. National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. *Faithful Nation: What American Adults and Teens Think about Faith, Morals, Religion, and Teen Pregnancy: A National Survey* Washington, DC: The Campaign, 2001.
9. Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1948.
10. Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1953.
11. Paul Gebhard, and Alan Blaine Johnson. *The Kinsey Data: Marginal Tabulations of the 1938-1963 Interviews Conducted by the Institute for Sex Research* Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1979.
12. A. P. Bell, and M. S. Weinberg, *Homosexualities: A study of diversity among men and women*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978.
13. Irving Bieber, Harvey J. Dain, Paul R. Dince, Marvin G. Dreilich, Henry G. Grand, Ralph R. Gundlach, Malvina W. Kremer, Alfred H. Rifkin, Cornelia B. Wilbur, and Toby B. Bieber *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytic Study of Male Homosexuals*. New York: Basic Books, Inc. 1962.
14. M.T. Schechter, E. Jeffries, P. Constance, B. Douglas, S. Fay, M. Maynard, R. Nitz, B. Willoughby, W.J. Boyko, A. MacLeod, Letter to the Editor: "Changes in sexual behavior and fear of AIDS." *Lancet* no. 8389, vol 1 (June 9, 1984): 1293.
15. Karla Jay and Allen Young, *The Gay Report: Lesbians and Gay Men Speak Out About Sexual Experiences and Lifestyles* (New York: Summit, 1977).
16. Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmadas of Qadian "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam" English Translation by Sir Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, Islam International Publications Ltd., UK (2010), ISBN 978-1-84880-055-7 <http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Philosophy-of-Teachings-of-Islam.pdf>
17. Holy Quran, Chapter 51: Verse 57.
18. Holy Quran, Chapter 4: Verse 2.
19. WND Exclusive, "Court told: humans could marry animals", 11 October 2014.
20. ChrismaNews: "Humans Could Win Right to Marry Animals, Court Told" 11 November 2014.
21. UK Mirror, Woman marries DOG in 'romantic' wedding ceremony - after marriage to man didn't work out", 10 March 2014.

SEX RELATED SINS

Anwar Mahmood Khan



When I was in my first year of college taking Physics, we had to perform an experiment in magnetism. It is known as lines of force. We placed a piece of paper on a small magnet and then placed on the paper small iron filings. These filings arranged in a beautiful design on the paper. The maximum area they covered was known as the magnetic field. Any iron object we would put in this field would adjust itself based on the intensity of magnetic force.

The same phenomena occur in the social world when man and woman are attracted with a surge of emotions which, if not controlled, could cause significant damage to society at large. God the Merciful has applied the same principle as we notice in the force of magnetism. The sexual urges are far more powerful and if left unbridled can wreak havoc in society.

Allah says in the Holy Quran:

***And come not near unto adultery; surely it is a foul thing and an evil way.
[17:32]***

This verse is the Magna Carta of the Holy Quran with regards to the teachings that would seize the unbridled force of sexual urges. All twenty-five known sexual sins can be truly prevented with this powerful teaching.

Although all religious scriptures shun the sins emerging from sexual irregularities, the Holy Quran does the following in addition to directly stopping the vices:

1. It explains the rationale and reasoning of why one should refrain from this vice.
2. It further elaborates how to refrain from this vice step by step.
3. It addresses the root causes of the sexual sin and charts out a plan of action to combat it.

Now let us review the 25 various forms of sexual sins and learn the detail action plan from the Holy Quran. For practical purposes we will only discuss four or five major sins as the others are sexual fantasies amounting to the same end result.

Adultery:

Most countries of the world have decriminalized adultery as an offense. All European countries have decriminalized this sin. Twenty-one states in the U.S. have done so. In Asia, only Taiwan punishes adulterers with a one year sentence.

When we review the data of adulterers, we find the following infidelity statistics:

- Percent of marriages where one or both spouses admit to infidelity, either physical or emotional 41 %
- Percent of men who admit to committing infidelity in any relationship they've had 57 %
- Percentage of women who admit to committing infidelity in any relationship they've had 54 %

This data is reported on April 18, 2015 by the Statistic Brain Research Institute with the following link:
<http://www.statisticbrain.com/infidelity-statistics/>

The various steps that culminate into the sin of adultery have been detailed by various sociologists and psychologists. Some number them to 22 steps, whereas others have a shorter list of 12-15 distinct activities that culminate into the actual commission of adultery.

Although the New Testament states that one should not look at women with lustful eyes, the Holy Quran, being the final code of law teaches that when confronted, instead of looking, restrain your eyes from gazing at them outside the prohibited degrees. One should cast his eyes at the sight of women, so the glances do not produce the subsequent mushroom effect on your emotions. Allah says:

[24:31] Say to the believing men
that they restrain their eyes
and guard their private parts.
That is purer for them.
Surely,
Allah is well aware
of what they do.

[24:32] And say to the believing women
that they restrain their eyes and guard
their private parts, and that they
disclose not their natural and artificial
beauty except that which is apparent
thereof, and that they draw their head-
coverings over their bosoms, and that
they disclose not their beauty save to
their husbands, or to their fathers, or
the fathers of their husbands or their
sons or the sons of their husbands or
their brothers, or the sons of their
brothers, or the sons of their sisters, or
their women, or what their right hands
possess, or such of male attendants as
have no sexual appetite, or young chil-
dren who have no knowledge of the
hidden parts of women. And they strike
not their feet so that what they hide of
their ornaments may become known.
And turn ye to Allah all together, O
believers, that you may succeed

In these verses casting one's eyes is an instruction to both the males and females. This is the reason Muslim countries observe veils for the ladies and no intermingling takes place as they are in separate quarters.

Western critics ridicule this ritual of Muslim females and consider that Islam mistreats women. Hadrat Ahmad(as) has prophesied that a time will come when the West will adopt Islamic *Purdah* based on their horrendous results of promiscuity. (*Naseem-e-Dawat*)

The Holy Quran presents five ways to completely refrain from sexual sins; these are described by Hadrat Ahmad (as) thus: God Almighty has not only set forth excellent teachings for acquiring the quality of chastity, but has furnished man with five remedies against unchaste behavior. These are [1] to restrain one's eyes from gazing upon women who are outside the prohibited degrees, [2] to safeguard the ears from listening to their voices, [3] to refrain from listening to the stories about them, [4] to avoid occasions that might furnish incitement towards this vice, and [5] to control oneself during the period of celibacy through fasting, dieting, etc.... We can confidently claim that this excellent teaching with all its devices that is set forth in the Holy Quran is peculiar to Islam. It should be kept in mind that as the natural condition of man, which is the source of his passions, is such that he cannot depart from it without a complete change in himself; his passions are bound to be roused when they are confronted with the occasion and opportunity for indulging in this vice; therefore, God Almighty has not instructed us that we might freely gaze at women outside the prohibited degrees and might contemplate their beauty and observe all their movements in dancing, etc., but that we should do so with pure looks. Nor have we been instructed to listen to the singing of these women and to lend an ear to the tales of the beauty, but that we should do so with a pure intent. We have been positively commanded not to look at their beauty whether with pure intent or otherwise nor to listen to their musical voices or to descriptions of their good looks, whether with pure intent or otherwise. We have been directed to eschew all this as we eschew carrion so that we should not stumble. It is almost certain that our free glances would cause us to stumble some time or another. As God Almighty desires that our eyes and our hearts and all our limbs and organs should continue to be in a state of purity, He has furnished us with this excellent teaching. There can be no doubt that unrestrained looks become a source of danger. If we place fresh bread before a hungry dog, it would be vain to hope that the dog should pay no attention to it. Thus, God Almighty desired that human faculties not be provided with any occasion for secret functioning and not be confronted with anything that might incite dangerous tendencies. (*Islami Usul ki Philosophy, Ruhani Khaza'in*, vol. 10, pp. 343–344)

In the verse cited above, another great wisdom presented, is the reasoning the Holy Quran offers for this commandment. In the Old Testament, we read the seventh commandment: Thou shall not commit adultery; it does not offer why not? However, the Holy Quran gives a reasoning right after giving the commandment: Allah says: It is a foul thing and an evil way.

The ill consequences would result from this evil way. Therefore, one should refrain from approaching even the earliest step of adultery.

In the Family Life magazine, Dave Boehli wrote an article entitled "Forty consequences of Adultery," published February 2015. Some of these are cited below:
My relationship with God would suffer from a break in fellowship.



FAMILYLIFE
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.

Marriage Parenting Blended families Faith Blogs Radio Events Shop Find Help

Homepage / Marriage / Infidelity / All Consequences of Adultery

40 Consequences of Adultery

The counterfeit pleasure of an affair can never overcome the ways infidelity can destroy a life and marriage.

By Dave Boehli Feb 07, 2015

I would need to seek forgiveness from my Lord.
I would suffer the emotional consequences of guilt.
I would spend countless hours replaying the failure.
My wife would suffer the scars of this abuse more deeply than I could begin to describe.
My wife would spend countless hours in counseling.
My wife's recovery would be long and painful.
Her pain would grieve me deeply and compound my suffering and shame.
Our relationship would suffer a break in trust, fellowship, and intimacy.
We would be together, yet feel great loneliness.
The reputation of my family would suffer loss.
My sons would be deeply disappointed and bewildered.
My grandchildren would not understand.
My friends would be disappointed and would question my integrity.
I would lose my job at church.
My witness among neighbors would become worthless.
My witness to my brother would be worthless.
My testimony among my wife's family would be damaged.
I might never be employed by a church again.
I might never be in men's ministry leadership.

The Holy Quran states:

"And when thou seest those who engage in vain discourse concerning our signs, then turn thou away from them until they engage in a discourse other than that"(6:69).

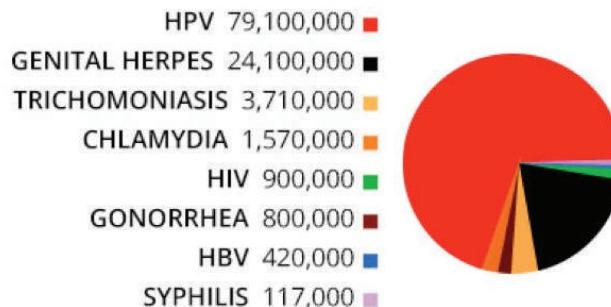
The Holy Quran further states:

"And those who are righteous are not at all accountable for them, but their duty is to admonish them that they may fear Allah"(6:70).

Muslims are taught that should others engage in indecent talk about Islam, it is best to walk away from them and engage in conversation with them only when they desist such efforts. Further, they are taught that their duty is only to admonish such people, they are not the keepers of such people. As such, they are not entitled to punish their misdemeanors. In the latter verse, notice the emphasis on the word "Allah." The emphasis indicates that there is to be no worldly punishment for blasphemy.

The Holy Quran already presented this great wisdom in the seventh century that modern thinkers are outlining today. When we examine the health consequences of sexually transmitted diseases, a CDC report states as follows:

ESTIMATED EXISTING INFECTIONS



All 25 varieties of illicit sex resulted in 110 million people contracting STDs. HPV is rampant due to all the varieties of Oral Sex. Bill Clinton, when caught with this episode, simply stated that oral sex is not adultery. The Holy Quran, however, has decisively forbidden it. Allah Says:

[23:6] And who guard their chastity

[23:7] Except from their wives or what their right hands possess, for then they are not to be blamed;

[23:8] But those who seek anything beyond that are the transgressors

Any mode of sex beyond the prescribed limits is transgression and hence forbidden.

No such specifications are delineated in the Torah or the Gospels.

Pornography in all its forms and manifestations is a pit of hell and is the playground of over 80 million Americans.

These statistics of moral degradation even in the presence of the Divine Scripture indicate that not only mankind needs a better Scripture and a better guide which could demonstrate the character of Hadrat Joseph(as) and the immaculate life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) as the combination of the real Divine Scripture for all times and a Prophet to demonstrate these virtues in his life, and a current example of a man for our times; these alone can save mankind from the pit of fire.

Homosexuality (Gay and Lesbians)

This is also a state of mind that is fueled by Satan to satiate sexual desires with the same gender, thus refuting the principle purpose of sex, namely procreation. The Holy Quran has forbidden it directly and indirectly by giving the example of the wrath of God on the two nations of the past Sodom and Gomorrah. Allah says

[7:81] And We sent Lot — when he said to his people, 'Do you commit an abomination such as no one in the world ever did before you?

[7:82] 'You approach men with lust instead of women. Nay, you are a people who exceed all bounds.'

[7:83] And the answer of his people was no other than that they said, 'Turn them out of your town, for they are men who would keep pure.'

[7:85] And We rained upon them a rain. Now see, what was the end of the sinners!

In these verses both Allah's displeasure on this heinous and unnatural act accompanied by the punishments that were leveled to the nations that adopted this serious vice. Center of Disease control on their website, report the following:

Gay and Bisexual Men's Health - A CDC ANALYSIS

Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) have been increasing among gay and bisexual men, with recent increases in syphilis being documented across the country. In 2012, men who have sex with men (MSM) accounted for 75% of primary and secondary syphilis cases in the United States. MSM often are diagnosed with other STDs, including chlamydia and gonorrhea infections.

HPV (Human Papillomavirus), the most common STD in the United States, is also a concern for MSM. Some types of HPV can cause genital and anal warts and some can lead to the development of anal and oral cancer. Men who have sex with men are 17 times more likely to develop anal cancer than heterosexual men. Men who are HIV-positive are even more likely than those who are uninfected to develop anal cancer. Link: <http://www.cdc.gov/msmhealth/STD.htm>

All the other variations of sexual performance need not to be elaborated as Allah has delineated the boundaries in which a believer must conduct his sexual desires

Bestiality or Sex with animals:

In US in 1940's the sex with animals was reported at 8.9 % as there were more farm lands and more farmers, this declined and in 1974 4.9 % males and 1.9 % females were involved in sex with animals. This is also a satanic curse on people. The Holy Prophet(sa) has been reported to say:

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbaas said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: '... Cursed is the one who has intercourse with an animal, cursed is the one who does the action of the people of Lot.'"

(Narrated by Ahmad, 1878. This hadith was classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albani in Sahih al-Jami', no. 5891).

There are many other sins all stemming from not safeguarding the private parts.

The Holy Prophet(sa) has been reported to say that the two people would enter Paradise who safeguard their tongue and private parts.

Narrated Sahl bin Sa'd:

The Prophet said, "Whoever guarantees me (the chastity of) what is between his legs (i.e., his private parts), and what is between his jaws (i.e., his tongue), I guarantee him Paradise." (Bukhari).

We pray that we all guard our chastity and indulge ourselves in seeking prayers that Allah keep us under the shadow of his Mercy (Ameen)

RELIGION & SCIENCE

How to save ourselves from AIDS and STDs?
By Zia H Shah MD, Chief Editor of the Muslim Times

There are 140 million people in the world suffering from alcoholism and according to the World Health Organization someone dies of alcohol every 10 seconds. One wonders, when we are all so strongly motivated for self interest and self preservation, why would someone take one's own life or commit suicide, in a manner of speaking, every 10 seconds, by indulging in alcohol? The short answer in one word is "addiction."

The psychology community is now trying to define another addiction called sexual addiction, which is equally as dangerous as substance abuse if not more. Sexual addiction is best described as a progressive intimacy disorder characterized by compulsive sexual thoughts and acts. Like all addictions, its negative impact on the addict and on family members increases as the disorder progresses. Over time, the addict usually has to intensify the addictive behavior to achieve the same level of excitement.

Like alcoholism, sexual addiction also leads to countless problems.

Human papilloma virus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted disease (STD). HPV is a different virus than HIV or herpes. HPV is so common that nearly all sexually active men and women, in USA, according to Center of Disease Control (CDC) get it at some point in their lives. There are many different types of HPV. Some types can cause health problems including genital warts and cancers.

CDC's new data suggest that there are more than 110 million total STDs among men and women across the nation. CDC also shows that there are about 20 million new infections in the US each year, costing the American health-care system nearly \$16 billion in direct medical costs alone.

Globally, over the decades some 40 million have committed themselves to apparent suicide through HIV infection and AIDS.

This article, however, is not meant to be a thesis on enormi-

ty of the problem of AIDS and STDs, rather a fail-safe solution to the problem. The alcoholics, other drug addicts or sexual addicts are not planning on hurting themselves or others but end up doing so as events spiral and things get out of their hands. This is the very nature of addiction.

How does experimental use of substances of abuse lead to drug addiction in some individuals? Part of the answer lies in a common reinforcement pathway in the human brain which drugs of abuse stimulate, potentially leading to addiction. This reinforcement pathway, which is composed of both central nervous system structures and endogenous neurotransmitters communicating between these structures, has been termed the "reward pathway." The reward pathway evolved to promote activities that are essential to the survival of the human race as well as other mammals.

One may compare the mechanism of drugs of abuse with that of viruses or bacteria. Viruses and bacteria enter an animal's cells and use the pre-existing cell "machinery" to synthesize more viruses, thus promoting their own survival. As the viruses infect more and more cells, the organism may become ill. Illicit drugs can take advantage of an organism in a similar fashion. Just as viruses take over cell function throughout the body, drugs of abuse modify cell function in these important brain structures leading to modifications in behavior. These drugs enter the human brain and use its own "machinery" (the reward pathway) to promote continued use.



Abusive drugs, although harmful to the organism, are able to capture this "machinery" in some or most individuals, driving further drug use and continued addiction. Sexual addiction works in a similar fashion.

Almost a tenth of population of any society that condones the use of alcohol is vulnerable to become addicted to alcohol and become alcoholics. They can either completely abstain or fall prey to the negative consequences of drug addiction. For some even the first drink after a period of abstinence triggers complete and dangerous relapse by triggering the "reward pathway."

Muslims, who believe that alcohol and wine is prohibited by God, never try it and do not become one of the 140 million in the world, who are struggling with alcoholism. However, this is not true for each and every Muslim. For, some do not hold the Quranic teaching in respect and awe and become vulnerable.

For those Muslims who respect and hold in awe the Quranic teachings of chastity and shun those things, which lead to promiscuity, are safeguarded from the consequences of sexual addiction.

It is usually not one mistake that leads to disastrous consequences. There is usually a cascade of events that ultimately move one from the camp of chastity and family values to that of promiscuity and relativism.

But, those who fall prey, how can they recover from this vulnerability or sin? Does belief in a Higher Power help or not? What we find in real life is that many alcoholics recover after genuine repentance, going through the 12 step Alcohol Anonymous program.

Under the heading of alcoholism, Encyclopedia Britannica says about Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), "Group therapies such as Alcoholics Anonymous are the most effective treatments." It describes AA further by stating:

"It is a voluntary fellowship of alcoholic persons who seek to get sober and remain sober through self-help and the help of other recovered alcoholics. Although general conventions meet periodically and Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., is headquartered in New York City, all AA groups are essentially local and autonomous. To counteract self-indulgence and promote the group's welfare, members identify themselves only by first name and surname initial. Much of the program has a social and spiritual, but nonsectarian, basis.

AA began in May 1935 in the meeting of two alcoholics attempting to overcome their drinking problems: a New York stockbroker, 'Bill W.' (William Griffith Wilson [1895–1971]), and a surgeon from Akron, Ohio, 'Dr. Bob S.' (Robert Holbrook Smith [1879–1950]). Drawing upon their own experiences, they set out to help fellow alcoholics and first recorded their program in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (1939; 3rd ed., 1976). By the early 21st century, *Alcoholics Anonymous* had some 2,000,000 members forming more than 110,000 groups in about 180 countries and territories (most of them, however, in the United States and Canada).

Many of the successful participants in AA did need to cultivate belief in a Greater Power beyond them to recover from the addiction. Let me quote here the testimony from the *Alcohol Anonymous Bible*. Some agnostics who converted to spiritualism in *Alcohol Anonymous*, write:

"People of faith have a logical idea of what life is all about. Actually, we used to have no reasonable conception whatever. We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves."

The writers also explain what lead them to reject spiritual truths. They say that the reason for this was that instead of taking a balanced view and mostly focusing on the teachings, they focused on the weaknesses of some of the religious people. They write:

"Instead, we looked at the human defects of these people, and sometimes used their shortcomings as a basis of wholesale condemnation. We talked of intolerance, while we were intolerant ourselves. We missed the reality and the beauty of the forest because we were diverted by the ugliness of some of its trees. We never gave the spiritual side of life a fair hearing."



For their recovery from alcoholism, alcoholics need a belief in a power greater than them. The testimony is very moving, and it is worth reading. It is in "We agnostics" chapter of Alcoholics Anonymous. Another moving paragraph which describes their agnostic past is, "Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself."

Components of true repentance are well described in the bible of Alcohol Anonymous and also in Gambler Anonymous. Both Alcohol Anonymous and Gambler Anonymous, consist of a twelve step program, which constitutes a good example of true repentance. Here, I quote from Gambler Anonymous literature:

1. We admitted we were powerless over gambling that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to a normal way of thinking and living.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of this Power of our own understanding.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral and financial inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have these defects of character removed.

7. Humbly asked God (of our understanding) to remove shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him,

praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having made an effort to practice the principles in all our affairs, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive gamblers.

If gamblers and alcoholics genuinely follow this 12 step program, which involves genuine repentance and honest intentions, many of them are reformed from their addictions.

The 12 step AA program is in line with the pragmatic and utilitarian teachings of Islam and generates genuine reformation.

Sexual addicts or those who have sinned in this domain can construct a similar program for future recovery, but, if they have caught an STD during their time of vulnerability that cannot be undone, even though allopathic medicine does provide fairly effective treatments for many of these chronic infections.



References:

- "alcoholism." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 05 Feb. 2010 ca.com/EBchecked/topic/13448/alcoholism>.
- "Alcoholics Anonymous (AA)." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 05 Feb. 2010 ca.com/EBchecked/topic/13445/Alcoholics-Anonymous>.
- Alcoholic Anonymous. Third edition. Page 49.
- Alcoholic Anonymous. Third edition. Page 50.

QAWAIDH

SAYINGS OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD(sa)

**Ibn Abbas(ra) relates that the Holy Prophet(sa) said:
None of you should meet a woman apart unless she
is accompanied by a relative within the prohibited
degrees. (Bukhari)**

**Umm Salmah(ra) relates that she was with the Holy
Prophet(sa) and Maimuna was there also when Ibn
Umm Maktum(ra) came. This was after we had been
commanded to veil ourselves. The Holy prophet
said: Veil yourselves from him. We said: Messenger
of Allah, he is blind, he cannot see us and does not
recognize us; whereupon the Holy Prophet(sa) said:
But are you blind and cannot see him? (Tirmidhi)**

**Uqbah ibn Amir(ra) relates that the Holy
Prophet(sa) said: Do not visit women outside the
prohibited degrees. A man from among the Ansar
asked: What about in-laws? He answered: They are
fatal. (Bukhari)**

**Abu Sa'id(ra) relates that the Holy Prophet(sa) said:
A man must not look at another man's genitals, nor
must a woman look at another woman's genitals;
nor should two naked men lie under one cover, nor
two naked women under the same cover. (Muslim)**

-Abu Umamah(ra) reported: A young man came to the Holy Prophet(sa), and he said, "O Messenger of Allah, give me permission to commit adultery." The people turned to rebuke him, saying, "Quiet! Quiet!" The Prophet said, "Come here." The young man came close and he told him to sit down. The Holy Prophet(sa) said, "Would you like that for your mother?" The man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. Neither would people like it for their mothers." The Holy Prophet(sa) said, "Would you like that for your daughter?" The man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. Neither would people like it for their daughters." The Holy Prophet(sa) said, "Would you like that for your sister?" The man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. Neither would people like it for their sisters." The Holy Prophet(sa) said, "Would you like that for your aunts?" The man said, "No, by Allah, may I be sacrificed for you. Neither would people like it for their aunts." The Holy Prophet(sa) placed his hand on him and he said, "O' Allah, forgive his sins, purify his heart, and guard his chastity." After that, the young man never turned to anything sinful. (Musnad Ahmad)

-Buraida(ra) reported: The Messenger of Allah(sa) said, "Do not follow one glance at a woman with another. Verily, only the first one is for you and not the second." (Musnad Ahmad)

-Holy Prophet(sa) said: There are three people to whom Allah, the most high will not talk, nor will he absolve them of sins nor look at them: an aged person guilty of adultery, a king who lies and a poor beggar who is proud. (Muslim)

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS

Khalifa of Islam App

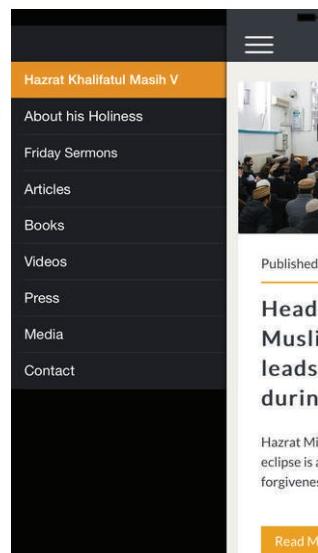
Alislam Team has recently launched Khalifa of Islam app for your iPhones and iPads etc. This app will provide similar content that is available on the Khalifa of Islam Website. Moreover, this app will contain a Push Notification feature allowing the Alislam Team to officially send notification to the user whenever we have the latest activity such as Friday Sermon or press releases, etc.

You may download the app from Apple App store via this link below:

<https://appsto.re/us/-DkG5.i>

Description of App and details

<https://www.alislam.org/apps/koi/email/>



Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA Urges Calm After Deadly Texas Shooting Condemns senseless acts of violence at hate rally

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA urges calm after a deadly shooting in Garland, Texas at the site of an anti-Islam rally. Early reports indicate two suspects opened fire at the hate rally and both were killed by security. News reports also indicate a security officer was injured during the attack with non-life threatening injuries. We offer our condolences to the injured officer and pray for his speedy recovery.

"Violence is never an acceptable response to hate speech, no matter how inflammatory and uncivilized that speech is," said Dr. Nasim Rehmatullah, National Vice President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA, "While we do not yet know what motivated these shooters, we urge calm and defer to local, state, and federal authorities to peaceably and justly resolve this."

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community USA recognizes the legal right to free speech. The Community additionally implores all individuals to elevate their personal morality in speech, and to maintain civility and justice in all affairs.

Why images of Mohammed offend Muslims?
CNN's Nick Thompson and Eric Marrapodi contributed to this report.



(CNN) Violence over depictions of the Prophet Mohammed may mystify many non-Muslims, but it speaks to a central tenet of Islam: the worship of God alone.

The prohibition began as an attempt to ward off idol worship, which was widespread in Islam's Arabian birthplace. But in recent years, that prohibition has taken on a deadly edge.

A central tenet of Islam is that Mohammed was a man, not God, and that portraying him could lead to revering him in lieu of Allah.

"It's all rooted in the notion of idol worship," Akbar Ahmed, who chairs the Islamic Studies department at American University told CNN. "In Islam, the notion of God versus any depiction of God or any sacred figure is very strong."

Prophet spoke against depictions of himself

In some ways, Islam was a reaction against Christianity, which early Muslims believed had been led astray by conceiving of Christ not as a man but as a God. They did not want the same thing to happen to Mohammed.

"The prophet himself was aware that if people saw his face portrayed by people, they would soon start worshiping him,"

Ahmed told CNN. "So he himself spoke against such images, saying 'I'm just a man!'"

In a bitter irony, the sometimes violent attacks against portrayals of the prophet are kind of reverse idol-worship, revering -- and killing for -- the absence of an image, said Hussein Rashid, a professor of Islamic studies at Hofstra University in New York.

No laughing matter

While the Quran, Islam's holiest text, does not explicitly prohibit depictions of Mohammad, most contemporary Muslims worldwide abide by the ban, based largely on religious rulings by Islamic scholars.

Satirical representations of Muhammad modern as well, said Rashid.

"In the context of Europe, where in many countries Muslims feel like they are besieged, these images are not seen as criticism but as bullying. Violence as a response is clearly wrong and disproportionate. However, it is not so much about religious anger as it is about vengeance."

But even in the United States, where Muslims are relatively acclimated, extremists have opposed the portrayal of Mohammed on "South Park," the satirical cartoon show, and the subsequent "Draw Mohammed Day," that erupted in response.



Ban includes Jesus and Moses

Mohamed Magid, an imam and former head of Islamic Society of North America, told CNN that the Muslim prohibition on depicting prophets extends to Jesus and Moses, whom Islam treats as prophets. Some Muslim countries banned the films "Noah" and "Exodus" this year because their leading characters were Hebrew prophets.

In Sunni mosques, the largest branch of the faith, there are no human images of any kind. The spaces are instead decorated with verses from the Quran.

But there have been historical instances of Muslims depicting the prophet, especially in Shiite branches of Islam, Omid Safi, a religious studies professor at Duke University, told CNN.

"We have had visual depictions of the prophet in the form of miniatures and pictures in the Iranian context, the Turkish context, the central Asian context," said Safi. "The one significant context where depictions of the prophet have not been image-related has been in the Arab context."

Johari Abdul-Malik, the imam for Dar Al-Hijrah Islamic Center in Falls Church, Virginia, told CNN that depictions of the prophet's teachings were sometimes used to bridge gaps in illiteracy.

Even historical renditions of Mohammed by Muslim artists were careful not to paint the prophet in too much detail.

Mohammed shown only in shadow

For example, Ahmed told CNN that Muslim artists in the 15th and 16th centuries would depict the prophet but took pains to avoid drawing his face. "It would be as if he was wearing a veil on his face so the really orthodox could not object -- that was the solution they found."

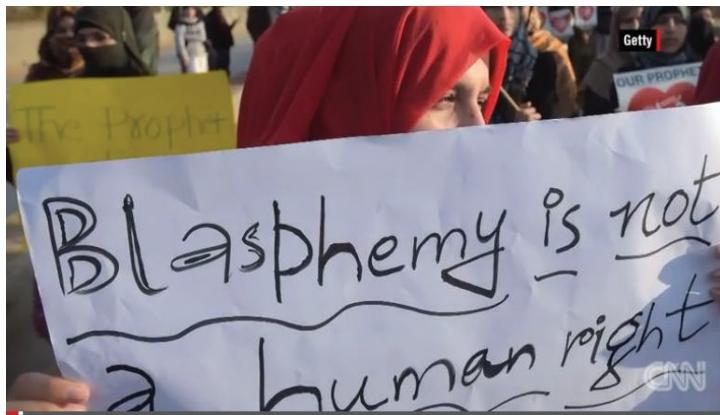


In a Muslim film called "The Messenger," which circulated throughout the Muslim world in the 1970s and 1980s, Mohammed was shown only in shadow.

In the Quran, there is "no statement from the prophet requesting his image not be recorded," Abdul-Malik told CNN.

Instead, the teaching about images comes from the hadith, a record of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Mohammed and his closest companions. The hadith is considered secondary only to the Quran in terms of textual authority, but the sometimes contradictory accounts have led to centuries of debates within the Umma, or global Muslim community. Scholars of religion say opposition to portraying Mohammed wasn't generally violated in earlier centuries because of a gulf between Western and majority-Muslim nations.

In the age of globalization, non-Muslims and critics of Islam have felt free to depict Mohammed, including in offensive ways. In 2006, for example, a Danish cartoonist's depiction of the prophet wearing a bomb as a turban with a lit fuse sparked demonstrations across the world.



Garland shooting: Two gunmen dead at controversial Muhammad cartoon competition after firing at security guards

By Alex Wellman
Mirror/world news/Terrorism

A prize of \$10,000 was offered by a Texas group to the 'best' cartoon depicting the religious figure where 40 armed security guards were drafted

Two gunmen were shot dead after they opened fire at a contest for cartoon images of the Islamic prophet Muhammad last night.

A security guard was also wounded when gunfire broke out as the men drove up to the exhibition in Texas at around 7pm and began firing at security guards.

The event had been billed as the "Muhammad Art Exhibit and Contest" and included a competition to find the 'best' cartoon of the religious figure with \$10,000 (£6,600) going to the winner.

In last night's incident, the two armed suspects drove up to the front of the Curtis Culwell Center in Garland, Texas, as the event was coming to an end.

They then began firing at a security guard - hitting him in the leg. Police officers, who were also on the scene helping with security, then returned fire and killed both the gunmen.

Geert Wilders, a controversial Dutch politician and anti-Islamic campaigner who is on a jihadist hit list, was among speakers at the event.

Police said they had not immediately determined the identity of the two gunmen or whether they were linked to critics of the event who had branded it anti-Islamic.

"I have no idea who they are, other than they're dead and in the street," city police spokesman, officer Joe Harn, said.

As a precaution, police were examining the suspects' car for any explosives that might be in the vehicle, Harn added. The exhibit was organized by Pamela Geller, president of the American Freedom Defense Initiative (AFDI). Her organization, which is described by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group, has sponsored anti-Islamic advertising campaigns in transit systems across the country.

Organizers said the exhibit was an event to promote freedom of expression. They offered a \$10,000 prize for the best artwork or cartoon depicting the Prophet, as well as a \$2,500 "People's Choice Award."

Depictions of the Prophet are viewed as offensive in Islam, and Western art depicting the Prophet has sometimes angered Muslims and provoked threats from radicals.

Charlie Hebdo, the French magazine attacked in January, had printed cartoons of the Prophet.

The security officer who was shot in the leg during last night's attack was treated at a local hospital and later released, he said. No one else was injured.

Most of the people attending the event were still inside the arena when the violence unfolded and were unaware of what had occurred until police came into the building and advised everyone to remain indoors because of a shooting.

Garland Mayor Douglas Athas told CNN: "The first suspect was shot immediately. The second suspect was shot and wounded - reached for his back pack.

"Of course officers not knowing what was in the backpack, shot him again. He was killed."



Women's Corner

Mothers: The Builders of a Nation By: Shahina Bashir

The special bond between a mother and child begins as soon as she becomes aware of the life she is carrying in her womb. From this moment onward the woman's purpose in this world takes on a new meaning. Her every action can influence her unborn child. She has to take special precautions and become mindful of her nutritional habits so that the child she is carrying has a healthy development and enters the world as a strong individual. No matter which ethnicity or nationality mothers belong to, they all have the same goals when it comes to matters of children. They are entrusted with the great responsibility of bringing up the future generation.

Paradise Lies Under The Feet of The Mothers

The Quran holds parents in high honor, but it mentions the special sacrifices a mother makes regarding her children. It says, "We have enjoined upon man to act benevolently towards his parents. His mother bears him in pain and brings him forth in pain; and the bearing of him and his weaning extends over thirty months. When he attains his full maturity at forty years, he supplicates: Lord, grant me the favor that I may be grateful to Thee for the bounty that Thou hast bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may act righteously so as to please Thee, and make my progeny righteous also. I do turn to Thee and truly I am of Thy obedient servants" (46:16). This verse delivers the simple yet beautiful vision of the relationship between the mother and the child. It is she who bears the infant, gives birth to him, and then nurtures him. The mother is there for him through every step of his life. When he reaches the age of maturity he acknowledges these sacrifices and shows his gratitude to God for the favors He granted on him and his parents. He then continues to pray that God may make him a righteous person as well as his children.

The Founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and the Promised Messiah, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as), said: "Many people diligently wish for children and they also have children, but it is not seen that they worry about and make efforts towards their moral training and inculcate in them the best and virtuous actions and make them obedient to Allah. They neither pray nor pay heed to the (various) standards of training". He also said, "My condition is such that there is no salat in which I do not pray for my companions, my children and my wife" (Malfuzat, Vol. 1, pg.562). Every married couple wishes to have children but they should also realize the responsibilities of raising righteous individuals.

Islam places a huge responsibility on mothers for the upbringing of children. The Holy Prophet Muhammad(sa) has said, "Paradise lies under the feet of the mother." Elaborating on this saying, the Fourth Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad(rta) said,(4) "It was never said for a man or a group of men that their progeny's or nations' paradise lies under their feet. This appellation of honor or certificate was awarded only to women. This lofty purpose is not found in any other religion or culture." He further added, "Women are holding the reins for building the future of a nation." In other words, women are the ones who can make or break a society or a nation.



The paradise which the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) referred to is not only that of the afterlife but is one which is of this life as well. In order to achieve paradise on earth mothers have to first ensure that their relationships with their husbands are the kinds which produce a heavenly atmosphere at home. God has appointed the husbands as the heads of households. As the head of the family, a man is the caretaker and the decision maker. However, a wife must play the role of overseer of the home and the training of the children. In order to raise righteous and God-fearing children it is imperative that the mother should be mindful of her duties and obligations to God. This does not preclude the role of the husband in the upbringing of the children but it is the mother who is seen to spend a significant portion of time in the nurturing of a child. Children are very perceptive. In early childhood their brains work like sponges taking in all that is in the environment. They will emulate whatever they see. If there is harmony between the parents they feel secure. When there is constant friction and arguments between the husband and wife the children feel agitated. They will not feel safe in their own homes. Arguments amongst couples are unavoidable but they should not raise their voices at each other and should address the issues behind closed doors away from the children.

In his book, "The Way of the Seekers", the Second Khalifah of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad(ra) (1) gave clear guidelines regarding the moral training of the children. He emphasized that childhood training is very important because what he is as a child will reflect upon his character as an adult.

He said,

"If you want your children to grow into good adults, then use your home as a kind of segregation camp. Keep children away from everything except good influences. This is the only way to safeguard the future generations."

In this short paragraph he gave the gist of how to keep children away from the bad influences of the society. It does not mean that they are to remain confined in the homes but rather they should be able to learn to discern between right and wrong at home.

Parents should be mindful of the company that their children keep. The Holy Prophet(sa) has said, "A person may adopt his friend's religion (or way of life), hence he should watch who he befriends." Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad(ra) (1) elaborated upon this hadith and said, "A child should not be allowed to choose his own friends. This choice should be made by the parents. They should choose well behaved children as associates for their children. The parents too will benefit from this arrangement. They will come to know the parents of other children whom they have chosen as associates for their child. It will lead to a kind of inter-parent cooperation. Also when they choose playmates for their child, they will watch over their behavior." Since mothers are the ones who the children are more close to, they can influence their choice of friends. This is not only important at a pre-adolescent age but more so when they reach their teen years and beyond.

Stay-At-Home Mothers vs. Working Mothers

Islam has never forbidden women from being in the work-force. The Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) has made it incumbent upon men and women both to be educated. Nevertheless, the primary responsibility of a married woman is the upbringing of the children and the care of the home. In America, there seems to be an ongoing battle between mothers who work and those who stay at home. This tension has been aptly phrased as the "mommy wars." Mothers who work full-time look down upon those who stay at home emphasizing that they are not contributing to the society or being productive. On the other hand, mothers who choose to stay at home to be the primary care-givers of their children think that working mothers are being selfish and materialistic. A Pew Research Study of 2013 reported that only 16% of adults thought that it was ideal for a child to have a mother working outside the home whereas one-third said that it's better for a child if the mother does not work at all outside the home. No matter how excellently equipped a day care center maybe or how wonderful a nanny is, none of these can take the place of a mother. Though studies indicate that there are certain benefits derived from a day care including social skills but they also show that when a child is at home with the mother there is stronger relationship built between the two. The compromise between the two ends of the spectrum is that the mother works part-time when the child turns three years of age. She can work full-time when the child enters elementary school. There should be a clear understanding between the husband and wife how they can both ensure that there is a balance between work and family.

Motherhood- An Honor Bestowed by God

The saying of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw) that paradise lies under the feet of the mothers should not be taken lightly. The simple state of being a mother does not automatically lead her or her children to Heaven. A mother can lead her child towards Heaven or Hell. God has bestowed such an honor only on those mothers who have a high level of taqwa (righteousness). When a woman is mindful of her religious obligations and strives to attain the pleasure of God, progresses in good deeds while staying away from sins, and consistently struggles to do so, then God will, in turn, give her peace and tranquility. When the children grow up in such an atmosphere they too become the recipients of God's grace. They then become responsible and God-fearing adults who make positive contributions to the society and the nation.

References:

(1) Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad. The Way of the Seekers: Islam International Publications, Ltd. Islamabad, Sheephatch Lane, Tilford, Surrey, U.K., 2002
<http://www.alislam.org/library/books/Way-of-Seekers.pdf>

(2) Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Address to Ladies, Jalsa Salana Germany, June 26, 2010.
http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/tarbiyat/OFFICIAL_VERSION_Address_by_Hadhrat_Khalifatul_Masih_V_at_J%20A6.pdf

(3) Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad Address to Ladies, Jalsa Salana Germany, June 25, 2011.
http://www.lajnausa.net/web/webfiles/tarbiyat/Huzoor's Addresses_2011/Address%20to%20Lajna%20Germany%20Jalsa%202011.pdf

(4) Daughters of Eve and A Society Reminiscent of Paradise: Speeches by Hadrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad. Lajna Imaillah- USA, 2005.
<http://www.ahmadiyya.us/lajna/DaughtersofEveandSocietyReminiscentofParadise.pdf>

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MUSLIM WIFE

By: Shehla Ahmad

We all tend to be more interested to read on if someone is talking about our rights. The subject of responsibilities does not seem very attractive. It is basic human nature. But we tend to forget that one person's responsibilities become someone else's rights. Therefore, if we study the subject by putting on the lens of the other side, it will be more enlightening for us whether the content is about our rights or responsibilities.

Marriage in Islam is a relationship based contract between two adults, a man and a woman, and has a religious significance since it is derived from the Sunnah, that is, the actions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad(saw). The two wheels of this vehicle, husband and wife, have their respective roles and responsibilities. In this article, we are primarily talking about the responsibilities of a Muslim wife.

We need to remember that marriage in Islam has specific goals which help us understand why the subject of marriage is so inevitably linked with the discussion of rights and responsibilities. Like any contract, success of a marriage is guaranteed only when parties are mindful of their part of the responsibilities.

God has laid down taqwa (righteousness) as the first guiding principle and building block for every marriage. This has a deep message. It tells us that while asking for our rights from our partners, we must keep taqwa as the guiding principle. Similarly we must remember that taqwa requires continuous effort. Nobody is perfect. While judging our partners whether or not they are fulfilling their parts, we must remember that God has put these responsibilities on each other in a reciprocal manner. That is, just as a husband has rights and responsibilities over his wife so does the wife have certain rights and responsibilities over her husband. God is the best judge. Thus, we should not rush to conclusions. We will still be answerable for our part. Moreover, while discharging our responsibilities to others, we need to remember fear of God the most.

Marriage should bring peace of mind. The Holy Quran says: "And one of His Signs is this, that He has created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are Signs for a people who reflect" [30:22].

In another verse, God reminds us:

"He it is Who has created you from a single soul, and made therefrom its mate, that he might find comfort in her" [7:190].

One needs to just ponder over these verses and come to conclusion whether there is true contentment in their marital relationship. Marriage is not about just finding peace but it is as much about giving. We can safely say that one of the foremost responsibilities of a Muslim wife is to provide this comfort to her husband in their marriage.

Another important aspect of marriage in Islam is leaving behind a righteous generation. In today's world some women tend to consider that having children is a matter of their choice rather than a responsibility. But the moment we realize having children is one of the objectives of the marital contract, every wife will realize that it's more of a responsibility rather than an option or casual choice.

The Holy Quran says:

"Your wives are a tilth for you; so approach your tilth when and how you like and send ahead some good for yourselves; and fear Allah and know that you shall meet Him; and give good tidings to those who obey" [2:224].

The Holy Prophet(sa) said:

"Marry such women as are productive and of loving nature."

So far so good. Most of the responsibilities we have talked about are reciprocal in nature.

Therefore, it may seem like there is an additional responsibility, which is also put on the shoulders of the wives, that is, obedience to the husbands. Women enjoy the privilege that men have to spend their wealth on them and take care of all their needs. These rights bring the reciprocal and consequential responsibility of obedience. Whenever we work in a team, there is a leader. If a leader does the role of the guardianship, he requires obedience from others in the team, to ensure smooth running of their affairs. It does not at all mean we should overlook the responsibilities of such a leader as well. He should also consult and give due importance to the opinions of the team members. We also know that Islam prohibits disobedience even towards political leaders as long as we are their subjects. If we understand the very logic and spirit behind all of these instructions, it is easy to see similar application in our marriages. It can help us achieve a harmonious marriage.

The Holy Quran says:

"Men are guardians over women because Allah has made some of them excel others, and because they (men) spend of their wealth. So virtuous women are those who are obedient, and guard the secrets of their husbands with Allah's protection [4:35].

There are many ahadith which give details of how an ideal Muslim wife is expected to manifest this obedience.

The Holy Prophet(sa) said:

"The best of women is she who adorned herself to look lovable in the eyes of her husband and who was pleased when he saw her; and she gracefully accepted decisions made by her husband and obeyed them cheerfully and she always took particular care not to displease her husband in any way or looked repugnant to him."

"If a husband invites his wife to his bed and she refuses, the angels keep cursing her the whole of the remaining night."

"It is the duty of the wife to look after your property when you are absent from the house and to guard her purity for you and to form the habit of saving for unforeseen needs and hard times. She must have a proper control over household expenses."

The Holy Quran declares that a husband and wife are a garment

for each other. In order to better understand what it means for a Muslim wife, we need to seek guidance from the Quran itself as to the purpose of a garment:

"O children of Adam! We have indeed sent down to you raiment to cover your shame, and to be an elegant dress; but the raiment of righteousness — that is the best" [7:27].

"....and He has made for you garments which protect you from heat" [16:82].

Thus a Muslim wife should try to become his elegant attire which magnifies the qualities of her husband but not his weaknesses in front of others. She should stand by him during difficult times. Not only that, it is her responsibility to try to avoid situations which will cause distress for her husband.

It might seem that expectations from a Muslim wife are very demanding or challenging. But one must remember that the glad tidings of blessings and rewards for such a wife are also very extraordinary.

The Holy Prophet(saw) said:

"A woman who said her five daily prayers, regularly fasted in the month of Ramadan, refrained from evil acts and did what her husband told her to do, will, on the Day of Judgment, be authorized to enter Paradise by whichever of the door thereof she might like to enter."

A wife who ignores her responsibilities and as a result, her husband is unhappy with her, she should fear from the severe warning as well.

The Holy Prophet(sa) said that there are three people whose daily prayers are not acceptable to Allah and none of their good actions ascend to Heaven. One of them is a woman whose husband is displeased with her.

Finally, there comes a logical next question to this discussion. What if the husband is ill treating the wife? What is the responsibility of a wife then?

"And if a woman fears ill treatment or indifference on the part of her husband, it shall be no sin on them that they be suitably reconciled to each other; and reconciliation is best. And people are prone to covetousness. If you do good and are righteous, surely Allah is aware of what you do" [4:129].

We should remember that reconciliation is the best. It is a responsibility placed on a married couple. A Muslim wife should not overlook it either.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Muslim Sunrise – 1953-Issue 2

Marriage, Divorce and the Church of England

"Polygamy had been practiced in Israel from the time of the patriarchs certainly till the day of Solomon, but long before our Lord's time monogamy had been the rule among the Jews. Divorce at the will of the husband and by mutual consent was current practice in our Lord's Day (though we are not entitled to assume that it was widespread). It is in reply to questions about divorce that our Christ's teaching is given and he certainly is not claiming to deliver some new doctrine on this subject but to give the true interpretation of the Old Testament scriptures. He recalls the creation by God of man and woman and His will for their cohabitation. The Mosaic ordinance of divorce he states was given "for the hardness of men's hearts" and he recalls them to the true way of marriage. The one flesh designed by the ordinance of God is violated by divorce.

.....The Church opposes legislation which loosens the marriage bond for the nation that our Lord's teaching sets the plan for the right relationship between man and woman. There is often a tendency to regard these particular relationships as private matters, but of course nothing more deeply affects the life of society and the nation.

The Christian Church, therefore, stands firmly for the general observance of the Christian marriage standard as a matter of public morality and national wellbeing; just the same as it would stand for particular standards of honesty, of freedom and of social justice. In all these cases the immediate interests of certain sections of the population will be at variance with the teaching of the Church, but the good of the people as a whole depends upon such standards, whether they happen to be welcome or not.

The foregoing perhaps serves to explain why the Church of England refuses to remarry in church those whose marriages have been dissolved in the Civil Court. In the light of our Lord's teaching no human agency can be regarded as competent to void a validly contracted and consummated marriage. Also (and this is important) the marriage vow is so explicit in character, "for better for worse, till death do us part", that it would be hypocrisy amounting to blasphemy to allow a person to vow before God fidelity till death while the object of a similar avowal was still living. The sacredness of solemn promises is not the least important aspect of human life which the Church's marriage regulations help to safeguard."

(The Rt. Rev. Lord Bishop of Kensington in Religions, London, England, January-April 1953)



Q & A

Questions & Answers

Q. Are non-Muslims allowed inside mosques?

A. Yes.

The Quran does not prohibit anyone from visiting a mosque (provided they are not there to cause trouble) as it is a House of God that can and should be used for the worship of God by all. Only idolatry is prohibited in a mosque but even then all are welcome to visit a mosque. This declaration against idolatry in a mosque was to protect the Ka'aba (and therefore any mosque) and to ensure that it would remain a sanctuary for those who believe in the Oneness of God.

According to Islam non-Muslims are even allowed in the Sacred Mosque in Makkah and Madinah.

It is recorded that the Christians of Najran came to see the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa). He arranged the meeting in his mosque at Madinah; during the meeting the Christians asked leave from the mosque for worship. The Prophet (sa) said that the mosque in which they were was a house of God and they were welcome to offer their prayers there. So they did offer their prayers in the mosque of the Holy Prophet (sa) (Ibn Hisham, I, 575-577)

Q. Why do Muslim men have beards and wear turbans?

A. Muslims seek to follow the noble example of the Prophet of Islam(sa). The Holy Prophet(sa) had a beard and wore a turban, both of which were the custom appearance of men of that age and country. However, these were not done simply to follow custom or tradition.

The growing of beards has been linked with piety and manhood for thousands of years across many cultures and civilizations and it is common in many religions. In Sikhism, the beard is seen to be part of the dignity and nobility of men. In Judaism and Christianity,

the ancient priests often used to grow beards and the shaving of them was seen as a sign of shame and dishonor. (1 Chronicles 19:5)

Islam has continued this noble tradition, where the Prophet of Islam (saw) encouraged the growth of beards:

'Narrated Ibn 'Umar: Allah's Apostle (sa) said, "Trim the moustaches short and grow the beard."'
(Sahih Bukhari, Volume 7, Book 72, Number 781)

From this hadith it appears that there is no fixed size or style of the beard, but it should be longer than the moustache. Moustaches should not be shaved altogether nor should they be too long as the hadith says 'trim'. A beard is a beauty of a man so it should be tidy as well.

'Growing a beard is one of the signs of nature.' (Muslim)

Growing a beard was also the way of the Holy Prophet(sa), and the Holy Qur'an says if you love Allah follow the Prophet(sa) then Allah will also love you (Ch.3: V.32)

As for turbans it is true to say that many Arab and Asian Muslims wear the turban purely for customary reasons, but there is no religious requirement that a turban should be worn. The reason why Muslims may wear a turban is because it reflects the spirit of Islam that seeks to remind people of God. When praying, Muslims are required to cover their heads as they are in the presence of their Lord. Covering the head is a sign of showing respect to God. Similarly some Muslims choose to cover their heads at other times as a reminder of their faith and of God. The form of head covering is not prescribed so can range from caps and hats to turbans.

In the Asian and Arabian culture the turban also symbolized that the person was a man of learning and wisdom. Thus it served as a reflection of what a true Muslim should be – one who is ever-mindful of his Creator and ever-inclined to seek knowledge.

Q. What is Islam's view on obedience to the law of the land?

A. In Islam obedience to the law of the land is a religious duty. The Quran commands Muslims to remain faithful to not only Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (sa), but also the authority they live under:

O ye who believe! obey Allah, and obey His Messenger and those who are in authority over you (Ch.4: V.60).

Any country or government that guarantees religious freedom to followers of different faiths (not just Islam) must be owed loyalty. The Prophet Muhammad (sa) stressed this point when he said:

'One who obeys his authority, obeys me. One who disobeys his authority, disobeys me.' (Muslim)

The present head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hadrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), has also explained:



Baitul Futuh Mosque, London UK

'A true Muslim can never raise his voice in hatred against his fellow citizens, nor for that matter against the ruling authority or government of the time. It is the responsibility of a true Muslim that he should remain loyal and fully abide by the laws of the land of which he is a subject.'

(Baitul Futuh Inauguration Reception, 11 Oct 2003)

This makes clear that according to Islam Muslims must obey the law of the land as anything to the contrary would mean that they are not obeying their Prophet or their religion.

Source: www.alislam.org



PERSPECTIVE



Serving the Wayfarer

In hot climate countries, it is a custom to take a nap at midday. In Central American countries it is known as a siesta and in the sub-continent of India it is referred to as *qailoola*. In my teenage years, I could never get used to the inactivity at noon. Maybe my energy level abhorred it. Maybe my body was accustomed to resting at night and daytime rest was not beneficial. Regardless of the reason, when the rest of the family members were taking the nap or pretending to, I was fully awake and had nothing to do. Under the hot sun at 110 to 114 degrees Fahrenheit everyone in the neighborhood was in closed doors.

One of these hot days in June, I was sitting in my room. The window was open so I could feel the breeze. The breeze was hot but it kept drying the perspiration. I had clear view of the lonely road that passed through our town. On both sides of the road was just dirt. There was one tree on the other side of the road. That was the only shade around as far as I could see. There were no trees between the house and the road so I had a very clear view of the road.

Every few minutes, a truck or a bus would pass through on the road. There were very few cars in those days so most of the road's traffic consisted of buses and trucks. You could not see anyone walking under the sun at that time of day. I was just sitting and gazing and all of a sudden a bus stopped on the road right across from the house. Passengers got off the bus. There was no bus stop there so it was unusual that a bus would stop especially in that heat. I knew there was some trouble.

The bus had a flat tire so everyone got off and found a place under the shadow of the bus. A few walked to the lonely tree and stood under its shade.

I figured everyone must be thirsty. I took a pale, filled it with water and got some ice from the thermos and threw in it. Yes, it is true, we did not have a refrigerator in our home just like everyone else in the neighborhood. I walked towards the disabled bus and started to offer a drink of water to the passengers. They were happy to see me, or should I say the cool water, since there was no air conditioning in the bus. The June heat of 110 degrees sure can drive up your thirst.

I noticed that one of the passengers, a villager from his attire, would come close to me only to observe and then turn around and walk away. He wouldn't ask for water but kept on circling around me with curiosity. Meanwhile, I ran out of water. I went to the house filled up the pale again and threw the rest of the ice from the thermos into it. I figured when the family wakes up and finds the thermos empty, they would just send someone to get more ice. In a big family, no one could tell who used what and when.

I came back to the bus and saw the man again. This time when he got close to me, I asked him if he wanted a glass of water.

He asked, "How much is it?"

I answered, "There is no charge for it. I am just helping out and figured the passengers would be thirsty."

So he took the glass of water and thanked me.

That is when it dawned upon me. He was thirsty all along, but he wanted to see if I was charging people for the water and how much. Maybe he didn't have enough money which was not unusual for villagers. Maybe he didn't believe in paying for water.

The bus left after its tire was replaced but the man had such an impact on me that I never forgot his face or his facial expressions.

I started to think what kind of society am I living in? A person has a hard time believing that someone would offer free water to stranded passengers on a scorching hot day. Or that he would think that there are people among us who would take advantage of the situation and sell water.

It was even more troublesome for me since Muslims have been taught to serve the travelers, or the "wayfarers" in the terminology of the Holy Quran. I don't know exactly how many verses are in the Holy Quran about taking care of the wayfarers but I have counted at least 8.

In the old days, people used to travel on foot or on horses and camel from one city to another. They had no hotels and motels but wherever they stopped at sunset, locals offered them food and drinks. It was hospitality, and people were proud to do it. With the advent of hotels, motels and bed and breakfast places, the world's culture has changed. However, the wayfarer still has rights to expect hospitality under the commandments of God in the Holy Quran. Generally, hospitality is to be granted for three days.

It was wonderful when people entertained strangers, made new acquaintances, got news about foreign lands, exchanged thoughts and, most of all, pleased God by following His commandment.

Nowadays, people at hotels and motels serve the wayfarers in expectation of tips. They get the news from cable channels and don't want to exchange thoughts for fear of exposing themselves. Making friends with strangers is not worth the risk anymore. Pleasing God, of course, is on the bottom of the list...and that's if it even makes the list.

I hope things are different now in my town. I know there are trees on both sides of the lonely road. I know, for sure, that there are people who would serve the wayfarer food and beverages without charge. I am just not sure if the society has accepted the fact that there are people who would take care of the wayfarer and would not be suspicious of their intentions, such as taking money from stranded passengers.

I also hope that the man did not get stranded again only to find that he'd have to pay to quench his thirst. That would not only be an omen for him, but the society which deprived him of his God-given rights.



Ramadhan Mubarak

This year the Ramadhan, the month of fasting for all Muslims, starts on June 17, 2015. We wish all our readers a blessed Ramadhan.



Fasting:

Fasting is another form of worship found universally in the world religions. Although there are vast differences regarding the mode of fasting and the conditions applied to it, the central idea of fasting is present everywhere. Where it is not mentioned clearly, it is likely that it may gradually have either been discontinued or have petered out through gradual decay in practice. The case of Buddha is an interesting example. He started his quest for truth with a severe form of fasting, but later on it is said that he abandoned this practice because it had adversely affected his health. In view of this one can understand why he discontinued, but this does not in any way indicate that he had ceased to believe in fasting. Perhaps that is why some Buddhists, here and there, still observe some form of fasting. Fasting in Islam is a highly developed institution, and needs to be studied in depth. There are two types of injunctions with regards to fasting. One relates to obligatory fasting and the other to optional. Obligatory fasting is further divided into two categories:

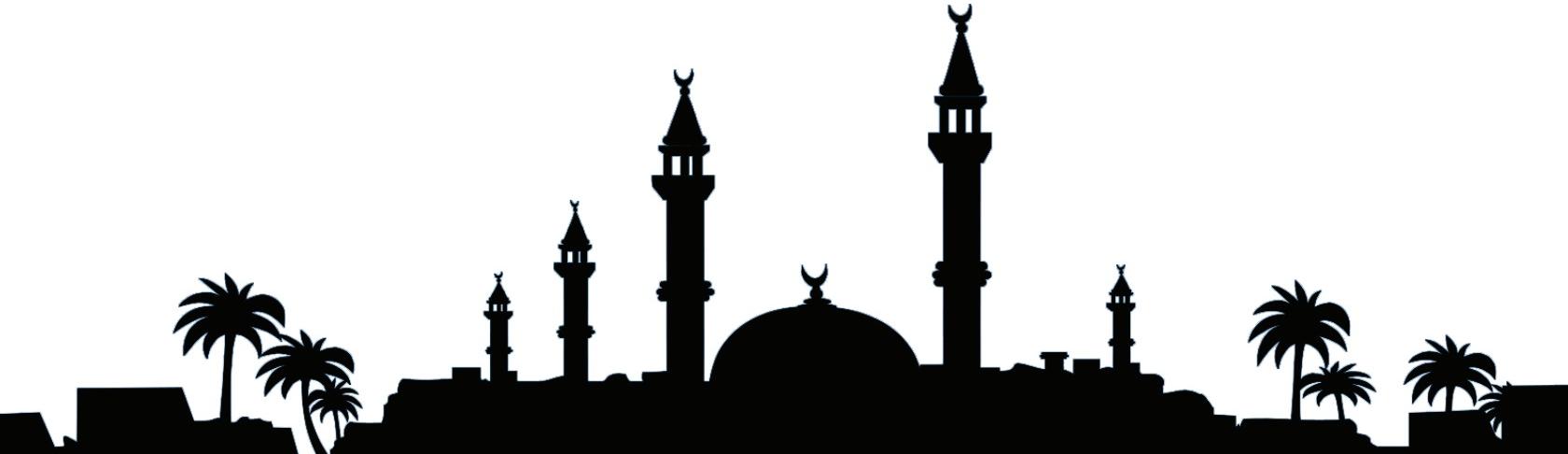
There is one full month in every year in which fasting is prescribed for Muslims all over the world. As the month is a lunar month, so it keeps changing around the year in relation to the solar months. This creates a universal balance for the worshippers. Sometimes the fasting in winter months is easy as far as the days go, in comparison to the long winter nights, while during the summer months the days become long and exacting. As the lunar months keep rotating around the year, so Muslims in all parts of the world have some periods of easy fasting and some of arduous fasting.

Fasting in Islam begins everywhere at the first appearance of dawn, and ends with sunset. During this period one is expected to abstain from all food and drink completely.

It is not just physical hunger and thirst that constitute the Muslim fast, but the nights prior to the beginning of the fast acquire a far more important character and play a central role in the institution of fasting. The Muslims wake up many hours before dawn for individual prayer and the remembrance of God. Also the Holy Quran is recited in every Muslim house much more than in ordinary days. A greater part of the night is thus spent in spiritual exercises which make up so the very essence of fasting.

During the day, apart from restraining from food and water, all Muslims are particularly exhorted from vain talk, quarrels and fights, or from any such occupation as is below the dignity of a true believer. No indulgence in carnal pleasure is allowed; even husband and wife during the day lead separate lives, except for the formal human relationship common to all people.

In Islam, alms-giving and care for the destitute is so highly emphasized that it becomes part of a Muslim's daily life. However when it comes to Ramadhan, the month of fasting, Muslims are required to redouble their efforts in this field. It is reported of the Holy Prophet that spending in the cause of the poor was a routine daily practice with him which has been likened unto a breeze, never ceasing to bring comfort and solace to the needy. However during Ramadhan, the reporters of the Ahadith -- the sayings of the Holy Prophet (saw)-- remind us that the breeze seemed to pick up speed and began to blow like strong winds. Alms-giving and care for the destitute are so highly emphasized, that in no period during the year do Muslims engage in such philanthropic purposes as they do during the month of Ramadhan.



Other obligatory fasting is most often related to the condoning of sins by God. This also includes violation of the obligatory fasts.

The optional fasting is so well promoted that it becomes a part of the righteous Muslim's way of life. Although a majority of Muslims do not go beyond the month of obligatory fasting, some keep fasts now and then particularly when in trouble. As it is expected that the prayers offered in fasting are more productive, some people keep extra fasts to ward off their problems, but some do it only for the sake of winning Allah's special favors. There is no limit to this, except that the founder of Islam strongly discouraged those who had vowed to fast continuously for their whole life. When the Holy Prophet (sa) came to learn of one such case, he disapproved of the practice and censured the man for attempting to achieve liberation as if by forcing his will upon . He told the person concerned that: 'Just by putting yourself to trouble or discomfort, not only will you be unable to please God, but you may even earn His displeasure!' He pointed out that over emphasis on austerity is likely to make one negligent towards one's wife and children, kith and kin, friends etc. (*Source: Alislam.org*)

The Holy Prophet (sa) reminded him specifically of his responsibilities in the area of human relationship: 'Do your duty to God as well as the creation of God equitably' was the advice. To some, after their insistent petulant begging, he permitted optional fasts only in the style of David, peace be upon him. The Holy Founder of Islam told them that it was the practice of David to fast one day and abstain from doing so the next. Throughout his life, after he made this vow, he kept the fast on alternate days. So the Holy Prophet (sa) said 'I can only permit you that much and no more.'

The institution of fasting is extremely important because it cultivates the believer in almost every area of his spiritual life. Among other things, he learns through personal experience about what hunger, poverty, loneliness and discomforts mean to the less fortunate sections of society. Abstention from even such practices during the month of Ramadhan as are permissible in everyday life plays a constructive role in refining the human character.



MAKE AMERICA HUNGER FREE!



Our Mission is to Reduce Hunger and Wastage of Food with a Vision to Make America Hunger Free.

FEED THE HUNGRY

Humanity First USA
300 E. Lombard Street, Suite 840
Baltimore, MD 21202
877.994.3872
<http://usa.humanityfirst.org>

Contact us at
feedthehungry@us.humanityfirst.org



Humanity First

**STOP
HUNGER & WASTAGE**

Advocate Against Hunger, Poverty, and Wastage!
Get Involved!
Champion the Cause!

Make a Contribution!

<http://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/FHAdonation>

Why Does Hunger Matter?

- 48.8 million Americans, including 16.2 million children & 6 million seniors struggle with hunger.
- Hungry children & teens show greater behavioral, emotional, academic and health problems.
- Hunger costs our nation ~ \$167.5 billion due to the cost of adverse health, lack of education & productivity.

No American, young or old, should be forced to make a choice between food and basic necessities.

Waste Less = More Food!

- The average household creates ~ 1.3 pounds of food waste/day.
- About 220 billion pounds of food is thrown away/year = filling a 90,000 seat football stadium to the brim/day = tossing \$15/\$100 that you earned into the trash.

SUBSCRIBE NOW



For quarterly issues of the Muslim Sunrise for just \$15

www.muslimsunrise.com

LOVE
FOR ALL
HATRED
FOR NONE

For Information on Islam: www.alislam.org



The Muslim Sunrise is published by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, USA.
15000 Good Hope Road, Silver Spring MD 20905

NON PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
CHAUNCEY, OH
PERMIT NO. 1

This magazine is not to be reproduced without permission from the Muslim Sunrise Editorial Board